NOTES FOR SPEAKERS

1990

UNITED NATIONS

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FOREWORD

The 1990s begin with good news about public perceptions of the UN. In all regions of the world, confidence in the UN is growing. Recent public opinion polls conducted in a diverse group of 18 countries on behalf of the Department of Public Information* have shown that a substantial majority of the people in all the countries surveyed felt that the UN was doing a "good job". In several countries, the favourable shift in public perceptions of the UN has been dramatic, with approval ratings doubling between 1985 and 1989. Its role in peace-making and peace-keeping was most often cited as the reason for increased public support of the Organization.

The polls conducted so far have revealed a remarkable degree of consensus on UN involvement in issues including the environment, peace and security, human rights, drug abuse, children's rights and crime prevention. People are concerned about their world, and they see a place for the UN in improving it.

But for all the growing confidence and interest in the UN, the surveys have shown that the public lacks detailed knowledge about UN institutions. In all the countries surveyed, knowledge levels—measured by the ability to name a UN agency, body or institution—were below 50 per cent. This is understandable. Complex problems breed complex institutions which generate complex information. The UN system is no exception to this rule.

Speakers who address community and professional associations, schools, trade unions and other groups can cut through this complexity, helping the public better understand the UN and how it relates to them. *Notes for Speakers* is a tool to help those who speak or teach about the Organization prepare effective presentations about some key issues. *Notes for Speakers* is not meant to be an exhaustive reference work and rapid developments, particularly in the political sphere, make it essential that speakers constantly up-date their information.

I hope you find *Notes for Speakers* useful. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Thérèse P. Sévigny
Under-Secretary-General
for Public Information

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* Detailed information about the polls is available from PECRU, Room S-1072B, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA.

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Notes for Speakers is not an official document and is for information purposes only. The information contained in this edition is current as of the end of *May 1990*, unless otherwise indicated in the text.

PEACE-MAKING

UNITED NATIONS

''There will be no security in our world, no release from agonizing tension, no genuine progress, no enduring peace, until, in Shelley's fine words, 'reason's voice, loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked the nations'.''

Ralph Bunche,
former Acting UN Mediator
for Palestine
Nobel Lecture, December 1950

A return to first principles

In September 1989, UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar opened his annual report on the work of the Organization by recalling that the Second World War had erupted in Europe half a century earlier. The destruction caused by this conflict, coming on the heels of the 1914-1918 war, had moved the world's sovereign States at the time to make a radical new departure in international relations. At the end of the war, they created the United Nations to give peace a more secure foundation.

Despite the UN's contributions to international life during the years since the end of the Second World War, the Secretary-General points out, ''there remained a gaping void—not an institutional one—at the core of the whole enterprise. . . . Collective security became a hostage of the cold war.'' The Allies, who had successfully collaborated in war, had failed to collaborate in peace. This situation ''left the United Nations in a waiting position—waiting until common sense and the dynamics of the world situation would induce a return to the way of handling international affairs outlined in its Charter''.

For concise historical background of these questions, see *Everyone's United Nations*, 10th ed., UN Sales No. E.85.I.16. The information in this chapter is current to the end of May 1990, unless otherwise indicated. In view of rapid developments, speakers are advised to make an attempt to obtain up-to-date information on the peace-making missions described here.

- **In November 1989, for the first time anyone could remember, representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States held a press conference together at UN Headquarters to announce a joint political initiative in the General Assembly. Their initiative later resulted in an Assembly resolution, adopted by consensus, which reaffirmed "the validity and relevance of the Charter" and urged all States to abide by it. The Secretary-General welcomed this attempt to increase the effectiveness of the UN. But he cautioned that "this new-found understanding between the two most powerful States . . . will not by itself be enough to ensure the revitalization and success of multilateralism. The world is a multipolar one and the Security Council itself has 13 other permanent and non-permanent members without whose support no decisions can be obtained. It is none the less true that what historically proved to be the main impediment to peace-making . . . by the United Nations has now been removed."**

Peace-making and the Charter

The Charter is a masterwork of common sense and, despite rifts among UN Member States, the well-spring of UN peace-making efforts. In his Nobel lecture in January 1989, the Secretary-General reviewed some of the means for promoting and maintaining peace described in the Charter, and how the Organization had adapted to the "cold war" environment:

- **"...the United Nations Charter sets out a process which, in its first stage, is based on the renunciation of force in international relations and on the peaceful settlement of disputes. If these principles are rejected, the Charter provides for collective enforcement action by the world community through the Security Council. Such action ranges from various forms of embargoes to the use of military forces by the Security Council.**

- **"In the political and military conditions of the post-war world, forceful international action has not proved to be a practical proposition. Sanctions and embargoes have rarely been agreed on, and military enforcement action never, apart from the exceptional case of Korea. Instead, the Security Council and the Secretary-General have pioneered a different route—the route of consensus, conciliation, good offices, diplomatic pressure and non-forceful, co-operative peace-keeping."**

Relevant in this regard is Article 99 of the Charter, which provides the Secretary-General with the authority to alert the international community to any matter which may threaten international peace and security.

The subject is peace. The question is: "How do we *achieve* it, and how do we maintain it?". Peace-making represents the Secretary-General's contribution to achieving agreements which, at times, may be implemented through the deployment of peace-keeping operations in the field. In general terms, peace-making is associated with good offices and negotiation—the diplomacy exercised by the Secretary-General in the efforts to reach agreements. Peace-keeping, on the other hand, is associated with the implementation of agreements.

Security Council and Secretariat: pillars of UN diplomacy

The Secretary-General has stressed two factors in particular which have contributed to recent UN peace-making efforts: a positive change in the global political environment which has

transformed the work of the Security Council, and the sustained efforts of the Secretariat. In a public address in 1989, he elaborated on this theme:

> **"...in conflict resolution, the diplomacy of the United Nations derives much of its strength from the convergence of the efforts of the Security Council and those of the Secretariat. Without the repeated influence of Council members on the parties to conflicts, the Secretary-General's task becomes much more difficult in obtaining the concessions necessary for an agreement to be concluded. Without the authorization of the Council and of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would lack the resources to launch peace-keeping operations. Conversely, the effectiveness of the Council depends upon the resources available within the Secretariat to implement its resolutions. The Council and the Secretariat are thus the essential pillars of United Nations diplomacy; if one of them gives way, the whole structure collapses."**

"Good offices", positive results

The Secretary-General's "good offices" have been a crucial element in virtually all the recent developments towards peaceful resolution of international conflicts under UN auspices. Never specifically mentioned in the Charter, these good offices weave together Charter provisions which call on States to settle disputes through peaceful means, and the political functions of the Secretary-General. The drafters of the Charter clearly saw the Secretary-General as someone with the power to anticipate and prevent crises, and able to exercise good political judgement in a wide range of circumstances.

Two attributes of UN peace-making: impartiality and availability

UN machinery for peace-making remains continuously at work. The presence of the permanent missions of UN Member States in New York allows for constant diplomatic contact and rapid response to potential crises. The members of the Security Council, always represented at UN Headquarters, remain ready to meet at short notice to consider new developments and, where agreement can be reached, to take action. The presence of political offices of the Secretary-General in selected regions of the world and the activities of his Special Representatives are important tools as he pursues his peace-making role. As for the Secretary-General and his staff, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar has pointed out:

> **"Impartiality and permanence are the two distinguishing features that give the United Nations Secretariat abiding strength . . . . The Secretary-General and his representatives may not be more talented than national diplomats, but they have the advantage that they are independent of States. They are, consequently, more able to win the confidence of parties to a conflict in the exercise of good offices. Their permanence, however, is a distinct advantage in the case of protracted negotiations. Indeed, one reason we were able to seize as rapidly as we did the opportunities for peace offered us by the changing international climate was because we had, for years, been maintaining close contact with the parties involved and working tirelessly to bring their views closer together."**

The Secretary-General draws his political strength from the support he receives from the Security Council and General Assembly. But he retains the flexibility to act independently. This

flexibility has made it possible for him to assist even when the parties to a conflict have taken different positions *vis-à-vis* a resolution of the Council or Assembly.

In his annual report for 1989, the Secretary-General states:

- **"It cannot be stressed too often that there is usually a point in an impending crisis at which the potential adversaries are readier to make concessions that subsequently they are apt to regard as surrender. Such points offer opportunities for multilateral diplomacy to be at its best in allaying the fears and suspicions that so often lead to belligerency. If difficulties arise at the first turn, it can use other means of contact and communication between the Governments involved. All this implies a conscious policy decision on the part of Member States to strengthen and use the mediatory capacity of the Organization."**

UN peace-making efforts have continued on all fronts throughout the 1980s with some notably positive results. The fruits of some of these efforts—such as Namibia's peaceful transition to independence under UN supervision—have been particularly visible.

Afghanistan

Following almost eight years of complex negotiations by the Secretary-General and his Representative, in 1988 the Geneva Accords were signed in the presence of the Secretary-General by the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as those of the Soviet Union and the United States as Guarantor States. The Accords marked the first time the latter two States became co-guarantors of an agreement negotiated under the Secretary-General's auspices. The Accords include:

- **a bilateral agreement on non-interference and non-intervention between Afghanistan and Pakistan;**
- **a second bilateral agreement on the voluntary return of refugees;**
- **a declaration of international guarantees to the settlement, to be given by the Soviet Union and the United States;**
- **an instrument setting out the interrelationships between the first three instruments and the withdrawal of foreign troops, in accordance with an agreement between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.**

In February 1989, the *UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP)*, which was established by the Secretary-General to monitor the implementation of the Accords, confirmed the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan

In 1988 the General Assembly specifically asked the Secretary-General to "encourage and facilitate the early realization of a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan". Since then, the Secretary-General and his representatives have been holding a series of intensive consultations with various leaders of the Afghan people in many parts of the world, as well as the parties and co-guarantors of the Geneva Accords and other concerned Governments. The objective of these discussions has been to create an international consensus—a necessary

development if an internal consensus among Afghans is to be achieved on a comprehensive political settlement—and thus the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan.

- **Following the end of UNGOMAP's mandate in March 1990, the Secretary-General established the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP) in order to continue his good offices mission. The Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan is assisted by a limited number of civilian and military personnel. Among the techniques employed by the Secretary-General in the exercise of his good offices, OSGAP may be referred to as the forerunner of UN peace-making offices in the field.**

Cambodia (Kampuchea)

Finding a peaceful solution to the situation in Cambodia has been a concern of the UN for more than a decade. On the basis of discussions carried out by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, in 1985 the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly listing a number of points which he considered important for achieving peace in Cambodia. Among them were the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the country, the non-return to the universally condemned policies of the recent past, national reconciliation and the realization of the Cambodian people's right to self-determination. Effective international measures should ensure the restoration of peace and the establishment of an independent, non-aligned Cambodian State. Following the Secretary-General's proposals, the process of dialogue and negotiation gathered momentum.

At the opening of the Paris Conference on peace in Cambodia hosted in July 1989 by France, the Secretary-General proposed that a fact-finding mission evaluate the requirements of a possible international control mechanism to assist in carrying out a peace plan for Cambodia. At the request of the Conference, and with the approval of the Security Council, the Secretary-General dispatched a mission to Cambodia in early August and reported back to the Conference later that month. When the Conference was suspended at the end of August, its concluding statement noted that while progress had been made in elaborating a variety of elements, a comprehensive settlement had not yet been achieved. Thus, no international verification mechanism was in place when Viet Nam announced the withdrawal of its troops from Cambodia in September 1989.

- **In his report on the situation to the General Assembly in October, the Secretary-General pointed out that the most important outstanding issue was national reconciliation. To begin to resolve this issue, viable administrative arrangements had to be made for a transition period leading to free, fair, internationally supervised elections. The Secretary-General assured all parties that he would do whatever he could to further the negotiating process.**

- **The five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, United States) participated in the Paris Conference and pursued a Cambodian settlement at a series of meetings in the first half of 1990. Their discussions have included consideration of an Australian proposal to enhance the role of the UN in the settlement process, with the agreement of all parties. In the course of developing these plans, the Five have requested technical**

information and advice from the UN Secretariat and have maintained contact with a Secretariat task force on Cambodia established by the Secretary-General. Other States have also pursued initiatives aimed at a peaceful solution to the Cambodian problem.

- **In addition, the UN has undertaken a vast programme of humanitarian assistance to the Cambodian people both inside the country and along the border with Thailand. Some 300,000 Cambodians along the border are under the care of the UN Border Relief Operation. About 20,000 others are in holding centres in Thailand under the care of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These refugees and displaced persons are entirely dependent on the assistance of the international community.**

- **Inside Cambodia, humanitarian assistance is provided through the UN and voluntary agencies represented in Phnom Penh. Children and mothers receive help from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), while UNHCR assists returnees, the World Food Programme provides food, and the Food and Agriculture Organization helps increase agricultural production. The International Committee of the Red Cross and other voluntary and non-governmental organizations provide medical and other humanitarian assistance.**

Central America

In 1989 and 1990, the UN played an increasingly important role in the Central American peace process. This period has seen the establishment of the UN's first operation to monitor an electoral process in a sovereign State—the *UN Observer Mission for the Verification of the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN)*—as well as the establishment of the *UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA)*, and jointly with the Organization of American States (OAS), the *International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV)*. These missions were launched to ensure compliance with agreements reached through complex negotiations which began with the first attempts of the so-called Contadora Group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela) in 1983 to find a solution to the problems afflicting the region.

Since 1983, when the Security Council and General Assembly adopted resolutions in support of the Central American Governments' peace-making efforts, the Secretary-General has lent his good offices to these efforts and regularly reported to the Council and the Assembly on developments in the region. To assist him, in 1989 he appointed a Personal Representative for the Central American Peace Process.

- **In 1987, the Presidents of the Central American Governments (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) signed the Guatemala Procedure, known as Esquipulas II, which committed them to a process of democratization within their countries and steps to build peaceful relations between them. The Secretaries-General of the UN and the OAS were included in an International Verification and Follow-up Commission on Esquipulas II.**

- **In February 1989, the Central American countries took three important steps: they set in motion the technical work to establish, with UN participation, a verification mechanism for their commitments under Esquipulas II; the Government of Nicaragua announced its decision to call free elections, amend its electoral laws and invite international observers, including the UN and OAS; and the Presidents**

agreed to devise a plan for the voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation of members of the Nicaraguan resistance and their families. Meeting in July, the Security Council welcomed the agreements and lent its full support to the UN Secretary-General in his mission of good offices in the region.

- **Later agreements concluded at Tela, Honduras, in August 1989 provided for implementation of this third step, and for the establishment of CIAV by the Secretaries-General of the UN and the OAS to assist in this process.**

ONUVEN monitored all aspects of the electoral process in Nicaragua, from the organization of political parties through the electoral campaign and on into election night. It was the first major UN operation in the western hemisphere. Its team of 240 observers reported that the electoral process had been ''impartial and fair throughout''. A ''quick count'' by ONUVEN on election night projected the result within one percentage point of the actual result.

ONUCA was initially established by the Security Council in November 1989 as an observer mission to verify the Central American countries' compliance with their promises to cease giving aid to irregular forces and not to allow their territory to be used for attacks on other States. The Council has expanded ONUCA's mandate several times, increasing its strength by adding some 700 troops. At the request of the Central American Presidents, and following consultations between the Secretary-General and all the concerned parties, the Council authorized ONUCA to play a part in the demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance. ONUCA was given responsibility for taking delivery and disposing of the weapons, *matériel* and military equipment of the resistance, and was later assigned responsibility for monitoring a cease-fire and separation of forces agreed by the Nicaraguan parties as part of the demobilization process.

Following completion of the demobilization process in Nicragua at the end of June 1990, ONUCA continues to carry out its mandate as originally defined by the Security Council in November 1989.

The civilian aspects of the demobilization process were assigned to CIAV. It assists members of the Nicaraguan resistance after demobilization, including repatriation and follow-up of Government guarantees.

- **The Secretary-General and his Personal Representative have also been actively engaged in efforts to end the armed conflict in El Salvador. The Secretary-General's good offices extended to the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) are based on the Security Council's July 1989 resolution which lent the Council's full support to his efforts in the region. At a meeting with the Secretary-General in Geneva in April 1990, the parties agreed to end the armed conflict through political means as speedily as possible, promote democratization of the country, guarantee respect for human rights and reunify Salvadorian society. They also agreed that the process should be carried out under the auspices of the Secretary-General.**

- **The Secretary-General has also been invited to monitor meetings between the parties working towards national reconciliation in Guatemala as part of the Esquipulas II process.**

Cyprus

The Secretary-General's mission of good offices to bring about a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus problem continues. On the basis of Security Council resolution 367, adopted by consensus in 1975, and high-level agreements between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, the Secretary-General invited the leaders of the two communities to New York for joint meetings in February and March 1990, hoping to arrive at an agreed outline for an overall agreement. The solution being sought to the Cyprus problem, in the Secretary-General's words, "is one that must be decided upon by, and acceptable to, both communities. It must also respect the cultural, religious, social and linguistic identity of each community."

- **After three days the Secretary-General determined that no further progress was possible in the March round of talks. In his final joint meeting with the leaders of the two communities, the Secretary-General recalled that the Security Council resolution which serves as the basis for the search for a peaceful settlement calls upon the parties "to refrain from any action which might prejudice the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of Cyprus, as well as from any attempt at partition of the island or its unification with any other country". He appealed to both leaders not to say or do anything that could aggravate the situation in Cyprus, and to remain committed to finding a solution of the problem of Cyprus in the framework of the intercommunal talks. Both leaders assured him that they remained committed to this objective. In March the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 649 (1990), expressing its full support for the Secretary-General's mission of good offices and calling upon the leaders of the two communities to pursue their efforts to reach a mutually acceptable solution.**

- **Following up on its March resolution, the Council met in July to consider a further report by the Secretary-General which called on the two communities "to stop mutual recriminations and to concentrate efforts on promoting reconciliation". The Council President issued a statement which expressed unanimous, "full support for the Secretary-General's current effort to assist the two communities to reach a just and lasting solution" to the Cyprus problem.**

Iran-Iraq

The Security Council's unanimous adoption in July 1987 of resolution 598 on the conflict between Iran and Iraq contained a peace plan which, as a first step, called for an immediate cease-fire and for the withdrawal of forces to internationally recognized boundaries. Following the acceptance of the resolution by Iran and Iraq, the Secretary-General negotiated a cease-fire agreement between the two sides, to take effect on 20 August 1988. The Security Council then established the *UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG)*, composed of 350 military observers and their support staff to monitor the cease-fire and report to the Secretary-General.

- **In the pursuance of the implementation of the other provisions of the peace plan contained in the resolution, five rounds of direct talks at the Ministerial level have taken place between the parties since then, under the auspices of the Secretary-General or his Personal Representative. The Secretary-General has met separately with the Foreign Ministers of both countries on several occasions. In**

the autumn of 1989, his Personal Representative undertook a shuttle mission between Baghdad and Teheran. Both sides were encouraged to focus on an agenda for new direct talks.

▶ **In February 1990, the Security Council lent its support to the Secretary-General's efforts to bring about direct talks based on a specific agenda he would propose. The talks would aim at achieving a plan for implementing resolution 598 that would reflect the understanding of the two sides on how implementation should be carried out.**

Iraq-Kuwait

In a pre-dawn meeting on 2 August 1990 the Security Council adopted resolution 660 (1990) which condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait eleven hours earlier and demanded that Iraq "immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces." The Council also called on Iraq and Kuwait "to begin immediately intensive negotiations for the resolution of their differences."

▶ **On leaving the Security Council chamber after the meeting, the Secretary-General told journalists that he was pleased at the Council's swift action, noting that the events of the previous hours were "of the gravest consequence to the United Nations and . . . to its Member States who are obliged to honour its Charter".**

Meeting again on 6 August, the Council adopted resolution 661 (1990) which called for a range of economic sanctions against Iraq under Chapter VII of the Charter by a vote of 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (Cuba, Yemen). In view of Iraq's failure to comply with the Council's previous resolution, resolution 661 called on all States to prevent imports from Iraq or Kuwait, the trans-shipment of commodities or products from Iraq or Kuwait, and the transfer of funds to those countries, except payments for strictly medical or humanitarian purposes. The resolution also called upon all States to protect the assets of Kuwait's legitimate Government and not to recognize any régime set up by the occupying Power.

The Council's Members voted unanimously on 9 August to adopt resolution 662 (1990), declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait to be "null and void" and demanding that Iraq rescind its actions purporting to annex the country. The resolution also reiterated the Council's demand for Iraq's withdrawal.

Middle East

The situation in the Middle East remains a major preoccupation of the UN. In his report on the situation to the General Assembly in November 1989, the Secretary-General pointed out that the dramatic political developments in 1988 and early 1989 had led to important proposals aimed primarily at launching a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. But he expressed concern that "valuable time is passing and that the willingness to negotiate that exists today may be eroded by the bitterness resulting from events on the ground".

- **The Security Council met on the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories on several occasions in 1989 and the beginning of 1990. In resolutions adopted in July and August 1989, it reaffirmed that the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War was applicable to the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and called upon Israel to stop deporting Palestinian civilians and to ensure the safe and immediate return of those already deported.**

- **In its resolutions, the General Assembly has also addressed all aspects of the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, including the status of Palestinian territory occupied by Israel and human rights violations against Palestinians by the occupying power. It has repeatedly renewed its call for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.**

The *intifadah*—the Palestinian uprising—in the occupied territories is in its third year. In the words of the Secretary-General, "the message of the *intifadah* is direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which has now been in effect for 22 years, will continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of their legitimate political rights, including self-determination. . . .a way must be found, and soon, to begin an effective negotiating process that can restore hope in the possibility that a just and durable peace can be attained".

The Secretary-General has begun consultations to obtain Member States' views on the issues that lie at the core of a comprehensive settlement. He has expressed concern over declarations that question the applicability of Security Council resolution 242, which in 1967 established fundamental principles for peace in the region. In his opinion, the Security Council could make an important contribution to the process by renewing its commitment to resolutions 242 and 338.

- **Security Council resolution 242 (1967) defined the framework for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. It called for the application of two principles: the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict, and the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force. Resolution 338 (1973) called for a cease-fire in the 1973 conflict, and the implementation of resolution 242 (1967) in all its parts.**

- **Following a meeting with the Secretary-General in September 1989, the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council issued a statement reaffirming their support "for an active peace process in which all relevant parties would participate, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the region" They also reiterated their support for the efforts of the Arab League Tripartite Committee, composed of the Heads of State of Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia, to bring about a settlement of the crisis in Lebanon.**

Events or trends in one area of the Middle East almost invariably have repercussions elsewhere. With this in mind, in mid-August 1989 Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar, for the first time, used his authority under the Charter to call for a meeting of the Security Council. He urged

the Council to call for an end to the firing in Lebanon in order to allow peace-making efforts of the Arab League to continue. The Council, in turn, appealed for an immediate cease-fire. After the assassination of the newly elected Lebanese President, René Moawad, in November, the Council condemned this "criminal and terrorist act" and called again for efforts at national reconciliation in Lebanon.

▶ **UN organizations such as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and UNICEF—and, to a limited extent, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)—have consistently worked to provide humanitarian aid to those suffering from conflict in the region, often in co-operation with the Arab League, the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and other non-governmental organizations.**

South Africa

In his address to the 25th Summit of the Organization of African Unity in July 1989, the UN Secretary-General pointed out that "the positive turn of events in Namibia and Western Sahara, coupled with other favourable developments in tackling regional problems, should encourage those working for fundamental change and the eradication of *apartheid* in South Africa" He noted that the General Assembly had clearly indicated the steps which the Government of South Africa must take in order to set in motion a democratic process aimed at shaping the political future of the country, including the release of all political prisoners, the lifting of restrictions on political organizations and on individuals, the restoration of freedom of speech and movement and the ending of all other manifestations of the state of emergency.

A special session of the General Assembly in December 1989 devoted to *apartheid* adopted a *Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa*. The Assembly encouraged the people of South Africa to join together to negotiate an end to *apartheid* and transform the country into a non-racial democracy. The outcome of such a process should be a new constitutional order determined by the people of South Africa and based on the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In June 1990, the Secretary-General dispatched to South Africa a team of senior UN officials to obtain information from the Government and from a representative cross-section of the community about the situation in the country. The Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly about the mission noted that the team's freedom of movement throughout the country, and access to the views of all, demonstrated a significant change in the political climate in South Africa. In his view, the path taken by the South African Government offered real promise for constructive political discussion and represents a significant change from that of previous Governments. But he also pointed out the widespread belief in the country that additional steps are needed to establish an atmosphere favourable to free political activity.

Western Sahara

On 30 August 1988, the parties to the conflict in Western Sahara—Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO—accepted, in principle, joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity (OAU)

proposals for a referendum supervised by the UN to decide the Territory's status. Three weeks later the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Western Sahara.

- **The current mission of good offices began in 1985, after the Secretary-General and the OAU Chairman agreed to co-ordinate their efforts on Western Sahara. The parties' agreement in principle builds on work begun in 1986, when the Secretary-General put forward guidelines and principles relating to self-determination in the Territory and ascertained the parties' views on aspects of a cease-fire and referendum.**

In 1989 and 1990 the Secretary-General's peace-making efforts continued. He met separately with the King of Morocco, the head of POLISARIO and representatives of the observer States (Algeria and Mauritania). His Special Representative and his military adviser have also visited the region.

- **Meeting at UN Headquarters in 1989, experts began examining electoral lists based on the last Spanish census of the Territory in 1974, to prepare for an eventual referendum. A joint UN/OAU technical commission was set up to facilitate and accelerate the peace process. The technical commission held its first meetings with the parties at UN Headquarters in July 1989.**

- **In May 1990, another joint body was established to verify the eligibility of voters and to issue voter registration cards. In June, 38 prominent persons from the Territory met with the Secretary-General's Special Representative and senior UN officials to explain the Commission's functions and seek their co-operation in the process.**

- **Another major step was taken in June 1990 when the Security Council approved the Secretary-General's plan for implementing the 1988 settlement. The plan calls for agreement on a cease-fire between the parties, and establishment of a *UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara*—or *MINURSO*, its acronym in French—to organize and conduct a referendum in which the territory's people would choose independence or integration with Morocco. In his report on the implementation plan, the Secretary-General expressed his intention to dispatch a technical mission to the territory to refine its administrative and logistical aspects.**

PEACE-KEEPING

UNITED NATIONS

Peace-keeping is, and always has been, a dramatic way of representing the international will to peace and conciliation in the conflict areas of the world. If it is backed by an international consensus and sustained by a genuinely international effort, it can become a reliable and extremely important part of our broader effort to build a world at peace.''

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Report on the Work of the Organization, 1989

In the the four decades between 1948 and 1987, 14 UN peace-keeping operations were launched to introduce an element of stability in volatile and dangerous situations in many regions. Their primary objective was to ensure that fighting stopped: to prevent international flash points from igniting wider conflicts, and to create conditions in which negotiated solutions to conflicts can be pursued.

Wherever UN peace-keeping forces have been deployed—the Middle East, Jammu and Kashmir or Cyprus—the chill of the ''cold war'' affected the local climate, and severely limited the scope for peace-keeping action. The last few years have brought a major climatic change in international relations, and a new readiness on the part of countries to use UN machinery.

A new generation of UN peace-keeping is in the making. In 1988 and 1989, five new UN operations were launched to accomplish a diverse set of missions: military observer missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Iran and Iraq, in Angola and in Central America, and a major operation in Namibia. These missions complement the peace-making efforts by Governments, the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Other possible operations for Cambodia and Western Sahara are being considered.

The information in this chapter is current to the end of May 1990. In view of rapid developments, speakers are advised to make an attempt to obtain up-to-date information on the missions described here.

The character and composition of UN field missions is changing to deal with a variety of functions: from maintaining civil order to supervising elections; from monitoring implementation of complex agreements to performing the now-traditional role of peace-keeping operations as buffers between hostile elements in a conflict. As the Secretary-General points out in his 1989 Report on the Work of the Organization''. . . we seem to be moving into a number of situations where, although there is a connection with international peace and security. . . peace-keeping action is mainly concerned with the situation within the boundaries of a State, instead of taking place on the borders between States or between conflicting parties''.

Mission accomplished

Two peace-keeping operations completed their activities in 1990:

- **The *UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)*, launched in March 1989 to oversee Namibia's transition to independence under free and fair elections supervised by the UN, deployed a combination of military, police and civilian personnel. UNTAG's military units monitored the cease-fire in the Territory as well as the withdrawal, restriction to base and demobilization of armed forces. UNTAG's civilian police prevented intimidation of the people or interference with the electoral process and helped to ensure the good conduct of the Territory's existing police forces. The operation's non-police civilian personnel assisted the Secretary-General's Special Representative in supervising and controlling all aspects of the electoral process.**

- **At its peak, a total of nearly 8,600 people of 124 nationalities, including some 4,500 military personnel, participated in UNTAG. UNTAG's mission was successfully completed on 21 March 1990, when the Republic of Namibia gained its independence from South Africa.**

- **The *UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP)* was established in April 1988 to help implement the Geneva Accords concluded between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the Soviet Union and the United States as co-guarantors. UNGOMAP's 50 military observers confirmed the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan in February 1989. With the expiration of the mission's mandate in March 1990, some of UNGOMAP's military observers were attached to a newly established *Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP)* to assist the Secretary-General's Personal Representative in pursuing his good offices mission. OSGAP and its military advisers to the Secretary-General's Personal Representative project the Secretary-General's peace-making efforts into the field—a new step in UN peace-making and peace-keeping.**

The true price of peace

The job of international organizations is not just to keep nations peacefully apart, but to keep them working peacefully together. In international conflicts, UN peace-keepers stand where these two tasks meet—often at great personal risk. Nearly 800 UN peace-keepers have died while serving the cause of peace. Their deaths are reminders of the risks involved and the personal sacrifices made in support of UN peace-making efforts. In its decision to confer the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize on United Nations peace-keeping forces, the Nobel Committee cited in par-

ticular the *"young people of many nations . . . who, in keeping with their ideals, voluntarily take on a demanding and hazardous service in the cause of peace"*.

▶ **More than half a million men and women from some 124 countries have taken part in UN operations. Today more than 11,000 troops and military observers from 46 countries, along with thousands of civilians—police monitors, support staff contributed by Governments, UN Secretariat field staff and locally recruited civilians—serve in UN peace-keeping operations.**

The military personnel serving in peace-keeping operations are made available to the UN by Governments at the invitation of the Secretary-General. UN *military observers* are unarmed military officers deployed in teams. UN *peace-keeping forces* are contingents of troops which carry only light, defensive weapons.

The Charter and peace-keeping

Peace-keeping is not specifically provided for in the UN Charter. But Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once referred to peace-keeping as belonging to a hypothetical "chapter six and a half" of the Charter: somewhere between the methods for bringing about peaceful settlement of disputes outlined in Chapter VI and the enforcement action envisaged in Chapter VII. But peace-keeping also reflects one of the first purposes of the UN announced in the Preamble to the Charter: the establishment of *"conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained"*.

▶ **Chapter VI outlines the voluntary means which countries may use to settle disputes: negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional institutions or arrangements or other peaceful measures.**

▶ **Chapter VII provides for "enforcement action" by UN Member States, including the use of armed forces or other collective measures for dealing with "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression". This use of "enforcement action" for the collective security of the membership has never functioned as intended, largely because of a lack of agreement among the permanent members of the Security Council. Provisions of the Charter which would have placed national contingents of troops under the Security Council's command never became operative.***

A means to an end

UN peace-keeping works in the service of peace-making: the sustained effort at achieving negotiated solutions to conflicts. Agreements are only achieved painstakingly, step by step.

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* The international force in Korea (1950) was a military enforcement action, not a UN peace-keeping operation. The force was not under the authority of the Secretary-General but was placed by the Security Council under the unified command of the United States. It was an enforcement action undertaken by the Council at a time when one of its permanent members, the Soviet Union, was absenting itself in protest against the representation of China.

But it is dangerous to cross a chasm one step at a time. UN peace-keeping operations provide a safety net for the political leaps that are often necessary to bridge the gaps between the parties to a conflict. The Secretary-General has cautioned against seeing peace-keeping as an end in itself.

- **"Peace-keeping is not, and is not meant to be, a substitute for peace-making. . . .Lacking a concerted effort to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the dispute underlying a conflict, the mounting of peace-keeping operations or mediation can produce an illusion of calm, beneath which resentments fester, threatening new outbreaks of hostilities."**

The soldiers of peace: what they do

Among the tasks peace-keeping operations have been asked to perform:

- **observing a situation and reporting on it to the Secretary-General;**
- **investigating incidents and negotiating with the parties to avoid a resumption of fighting;**
- **physically controlling buffer zones;**
- **controlling movements of armed personnel and weapons in sensitive areas;**
- **verifying compliance with cease-fires or other agreements;**
- **helping to maintain law and order;**
- **helping the local Government to restore normal conditions in an area where fighting has taken place;**
- **providing humanitarian assistance to the local population;**
- **supervising and controlling elections;**
- **demobilizing irregular forces and disposing of weapons and *materiél*.**

Seven characteristics of UN peace-keeping

Seven basic characteristics of UN peace-keeping operations have been identified:

- **consent of the parties involved to deployment of a UN peace-keeping force (Their consent, and particularly that of States in whose territory peace-keeping operations are deployed, is an essential pre-condition for all UN peace-keeping operations. Peace-keeping cannot be imposed on the parties involved);**
- **support of the international community—the Security Council establishes the force and defines its mandate;**
- **voluntary contribution of troops by Member States acceptable to the parties;**
- **command of the Secretary-General—a peace-keeping operation is under the command of the Secretary-General, whose authority derives from the mandate given by the Security Council to which he reports regularly;**

- **impartiality of the force—the operation must not be used in any way to favour one party against another;**
- **use of force to the minimum extent possible—five of the eight operations currently under way are unarmed observer groups; others carry light arms but can use them only in self-defence;**
- **financing by the international community.**

An essential ingredient: political will

Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar has welcomed the new spirit of consensus on UN peace-keeping efforts. But he has also pointed out that this consensus must be sustained by a clear understanding of its rationale. In a speech to a conference of parliamentarians at UN Headquarters in September 1989, he pointed out the basic requirements of UN peace-keeping:

- **"The launching of peace-keeping operations is feasible and also desirable only at clearly defined points—both in location and in strategy. This would exclude them from internal conflicts unrelated to an international dispute and also from other situations of an indeterminate or shifting character. . . . The conditions for the success of peace-keeping operations remain what they have always been: a workable mandate, the consistent support of the Security Council, the readiness of Member States to volunteer military personnel and adequate financial arrangements."**

Peace-keeping past and present

Eight UN peace-keeping operations are currently deployed:

UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA)

Headquarters: Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Participating countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Federal Republic of Germany (operational support), India, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Venezuela
Strength: 200 observers, 700 troops
Purpose: ONUCA was established by the Security Council in November 1989 in response to a request from the five Central American Presidents. ONUCA's initial task was to verify the five countries' compliance with their pledges to cease aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements in the region and not to allow their territory to be used for attacks on other States.ONUCA's mandate was expanded in March 1990, when the Security Council approved the Secretary-General's proposal for ONUCA to participate in the voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance. In April 1990 ONUCA's mandate was expanded again to enable it to monitor a cease-fire and separation of forces agreed by the Nicaraguan parties as part of the demobilization process, and to receive and dispose of weapons, *matériel* and equipment of the resistance.

ONUCA and the International Support and Verification Commission, a joint undertaking of the UN and the Organization of American States, are part of a broader peace process which included a *UN Observer Mission for the Verification of Elections in Nicaragua (ONUVEN)*, a

civilian operation which represented the first time the UN provided observers to elections in an independent State.

UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM)
Headquarters: Luanda, Angola
Participating countries: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Congo, Czechoslovakia, India, Jordan, Norway, Spain, Yugoslavia
Strength: 60 military observers
Purpose: To verify the redeployment northwards of 50,000 Cuban troops in Angola, beginning in January 1989, and their phased and total withdrawal from the territory of Angola, in accordance with the timetable agreed upon between the two Governments. Arrangements for the establishment of the mission entered into force after a tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa, and a bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba, were signed at UN Headquarters in December 1988.

United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG)
Headquarters: Baghdad, Iraq, and Teheran, Iran
Participating countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Senegal, Sweden, Turkey, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, Zambia
Strength: 350 observers and 50 operational support personnel
Purpose: Following the announcement of a cease-fire in the war between Iran and Iraq by the UN Secretary-General on 8 August 1988, and prior to its taking effect on 20 August, UNIIMOG was established by the Security Council. UNIIMOG's principal tasks are to monitor the compliance by the two sides with the cease-fire, to supervise the withdrawal of troops to the internationally recognized boundaries and to obtain the concurrence of the parties to other arrangements which, pending a comprehensive settlement, could help to reduce tension and build confidence between them.

United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)
Headquarters: Rawalpindi (November-April); Srinagar (May-October)
Participating countries: Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Uruguay
Strength: 35 observers
Purpose: UNMOGIP has its origin in a 1948 Security Council resolution establishing a UN Commission for India and Pakistan and a subsequent resolution in which the Council laid down a procedure for the restoration of peace and order in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, an area whose status had become a matter of conflict between the two Governments. In January 1949, a cease-fire came into effect and the military observers of UNMOGIP were deployed to assist in its observance. The observers' functions were confirmed under the July 1949 Karachi Agreement between India and Pakistan, which established a cease-fire line between the two countries. Those functions included observing and reporting, investigating complaints of violations of the cease-fire and the cease-fire line and keeping the Secretary-General informed on the way the agreement was being observed. At present, UNMOGIP observers are stationed on

both sides of the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan under the Simla Agreement of July 1972.

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)
Headquarters: Jerusalem
Participating countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Soviet Union, Sweden, Switzerland, United States
Strength: 300 observers
Purpose: Since its establishment in 1948, initially to supervise the truce called for in Palestine by the Security Council during the first Arab-Israeli war, UNTSO has played a central role in the Middle East. Its personnel have monitored the observance of cease-fire arrangements between the hostile parties, acted as go-betweens for those parties and ensured that isolated incidents were contained and prevented from escalating into major conflicts. UNTSO personnel have also been available at short notice to form the nucleus of other peace-keeping operations and have stayed on to assist those operations.

UNTSO observers assisted in the initial phase of UNIIMOG and were also detached to UNGOMAP. They continue to assist UNDOF and UNIFIL in the performance of their tasks.

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)
Headquarters: Naqoura, Lebanon
Participating countries: Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Norway, Sweden
Strength: 5,900 troops
Purpose: Following the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon on 15 March 1978, the Security Council called for an end to Israel's military action and, on 19 March, set up UNIFIL to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore international peace and security, and assist the Lebanese Government in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. After the Israeli invasion of 1982, UNIFIL remained in the area with the same mandate. Because Israel has not withdrawn its forces completely from Lebanese territory and continues to maintain a "security zone" north of the international border, UNIFIL has thus far been unable to complete its deployment to the border as required by its mandate. Meanwhile, the Security Council has maintained the original mandate of the force and kept it in being because of its valuable roles in containing violence and providing humanitarian assistance in the very troubled circumstances of southern Lebanon.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)
Headquarters: Damascus, Syria
Participating countries: Austria, Canada, Finland, Poland
Strength: 1,335 troops and observers
Purpose: Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, a disengagement agreement was concluded in May 1974 between Israel and Syria. In accordance with the agreement, an "area of separation" was created on the Golan Heights between Israeli and Syrian troops. The parties further agreed to limit their forces and armaments in two equal "areas of limitation" on either side

of the area of separation. UNDOF was set up by the Security Council on the day the agreement was signed and was deployed in the area of separation. UNDOF also monitors compliance by the parties with the agreed limitations on forces and armaments.

United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)
Headquarters: Nicosia, Cyprus
Participating countries: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, United Kingdom
Strength: 2,200 troops, 38 civilian police
Purpose: In March 1964, after widespread intercommunal violence in Cyprus, UNFICYP was established by the Security Council to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Following the 1974 Turkish military intervention in the wake of a *coup d'état* against the Cyprus Government, cease-fire lines were agreed with the Cyprus National Guard and with the Turkish forces. UNFICYP currently controls a 180-kilometre-long buffer zone between the cease-fire lines and provides security for civilians of both communities living or working in the area between the lines. It is also responsible for ensuring that the *status quo* along the two cease-fire lines is maintained. It thus continues to maintain calm in Cyprus, a condition essential to the pursuit of the Secretary-General's mission of good offices relating to the Cyprus conflict.

Past Peace-keeping operations:

PEACE-KEEPING FORCES*

- **November 1956—June 1967 First UN Emergency Force* (UNEF I)**
  July 1960—June 1964 UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC)
  October 1962—April 1963 UN Security force in West New Guinea (West Irian) (UNSF)
  October 1973—July 1979 Second UN Emergency Force* (UNEF II)
  April 1989—March 1990 UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)

* UNEF I was deployed in the Suez Canal sector in the Sinai peninsula along the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Demarcation Line; UNEF II was deployed in the Suez Canal sector in the Sinai peninsula.

OBSERVER MISSIONS

- **June 1958—December 1958 UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL)**
  June 1963—September 1964 UN Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM)
  May 1965—October 1966 Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic (DOMREP)
  September 1965—March 1966 UN India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM)
  April 1988—March 1990 UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP)

Peace-keeping on the instalment plan?

Total UN costs for peace-keeping in 1989 were nearly $1 billion, a sum almost equal to the regular budget of the entire Organization. The costs of peace-keeping operations are usually apportioned among UN Member States. Observer missions are generally financed out of the regular administrative budget of the United Nations. Peace-keeping forces are usually financed from separate budgets, which include reimbursement to troop-contributing countries for their "out-of-pocket" expenses. Each Member State is assessed for a certain share of the cost. The scale of assessments, established by the General Assembly, takes into account the relative economic wealth of countries, with the permanent members of the Security Council assessed a larger share. UNFICYP, which is financed entirely by voluntary contributions, is an exception.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his 1989 report on the work of the Organization, *"...the expense of peace-keeping is minimal by comparison with the costs—human, financial, military—of the alternative. Peace-keeping costs are infinitesimal by comparison with national military expenditures. And peace-keeping could be an important part of plans to reduce these national expenditures."*

Despite the new consensus in favour of peace-keeping, a number of countries continue to decline to pay their share on grounds of principle, while others are behind in their payments. This situation puts an intolerable burden on troop-contributing countries, which usually bear the bulk of the expenses. The failure of member States to meet their financial obligations for peace-keeping ultimately risks jeopardizing the missions for which the operations were launched, and undercutting the peace-making efforts that depend on them.

- **The Secretary-General has repeatedly appealed to Member States to pay their assessments for all UN expenses in full and on time. At the end of May 1990, unpaid assessments to the UN regular budget amounted to more than $900 million. In addition, unpaid peace-keeping assessments totalled over $400 million.**

- **There is some reason for optimism, however. An important development of the past few years is that the Soviet Union, which for many years was sceptical of or even opposed to peace-keeping, now lends its full support to these operations and has begun to pay peace-keeping assessments it previously withheld.**

The Secretary-General has pointed out that while they are linked with international diplomacy, UN peace-keeping operations must conform to the highest standards of military efficiency. They must have appropriate personnel, monitoring equipment and technology, as well as funds. He has made several suggestions for strengthening UN peace-keeping capabilities:

- **all Member States with the capacity could earmark units in their armed forces which could be made available for service with the UN;**

- **the Organization should have complete assurance of obtaining logistical support from countries which have the necessary means;**

- **a variety of advanced technologies for monitoring cease-fires and troop withdrawals should be available to UN peace-keepers.**

The Secretary-General has also proposed an increase in the UN Working Capital Fund and in the amounts which he and the Assembly's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions can commit for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, in order to allow swift action by the UN when new peace-keeping operations are called for. He has created a panel of his most senior advisers at Headquarters to anticipate new peace-keeping requirements and monitor operations in the field.

For their part, the General Assembly and its Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations have asked the Secretary-General to survey the Member States for personnel, material and technical resources and services which they would be prepared to offer UN peace-keeping operations and to establish a registry of these resources. They have also asked the Secretariat to study the tasks and services which civilian personnel could perform in peace-keeping operations.

DISARMAMENT

UNITED NATIONS

"Our small planet is getting endangered: by the arsenals of weapons which could blow it up; by the burden of military expenditures which could sink it under; and by the unmet basic needs of two thirds of its population which subsists on less than one third of its resources. We belong to a near universal constituency which believes that we are borrowing this Earth from our children as much as we inherited it from our forefathers. The carrying capacity of Earth is not infinite, nor are its resources . . . Must we stand by as helpless witnesses of a drift towards greater insecurity at higher cost?"

From the Declaration on Disarmament and Development
by a Panel of Eminent Personalities New York, 1986

1945: New weapons, new tools

Alfred Nobel, who invented dynamite and other explosives, was also the man who introduced the Nobel Prizes. In a letter to Baroness Bertha von Suttner, a writer and well-known peace activist, he once said," I do more for peace with my guns than you do with your disarmament lectures."

Nobel was a pacifist. He was convinced that the destructive power of his explosives would bring an end to war. He was wrong. Years later, in another letter, he noted armaments would only bring about the elimination of war when they were powerful enough to destroy not only the military forces but the civilian population as well.

Today, the world has reached that stage. It now has the capacity to destroy itself not just once but many times over.

The world was radically changed in August 1945 when it entered the age of nuclear warfare. On 6 August, the first atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, immediately killing more than 78,000 people and wounding another 40,000. Half the city was destroyed. Three days later, a second bomb completely destroyed Nagasaki, killing 40,000 people.

Nuclear weapons and the United Nations belong to the same generation. One represents the single greatest threat to the survival of mankind; the other our strongest defence against that threat.

- **The UN Charter was written in the first half of 1945 by the representatives of 50 nations gathered in San Francisco. Two and a half months after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were levelled by nuclear blasts, the Charter came into force, formally establishing the United Nations: a new tool for building a system of international law and maintaining international peace and security.**

Hope for a peaceful world after the Second World War was soon replaced by fear. Deteriorating relations among States, and particularly among the Security Council's permanent members, undermined the system of collective security outlined in the Charter. In the words of the current UN Secretary-General, ''collective security became a hostage of the cold war'' and signalled the beginning of an unprecedented arms race.

The past two years have seen new reasons for hope—but not complacency—in efforts to reverse the arms race. In his annual report published in September 1989, the Secretary-General noted that ''the broad objectives of arms limitation and disarmament, which were regarded as utopian, have begun to appear practical and achievable'', but he cautioned that ''the steps towards arms reduction taken by the two militarily most powerful States and the proposals under consideration between the two major alliances present a marked contrast to the lack of comparable progress elsewhere''.

The war machine: 50 years later

Mankind has so far avoided another nuclear war, due in part to United Nations action. But the world remains a dangerous place: weapons stockpiles continue to grow, more people train for war every day, and the costs of the arms race continue to mount.

In the years since the Second World War, the world has witnessed some 150 wars. These conflicts have cost more than 20 million lives, more than 80 per cent of them civilians. In 1987 alone, more than 2.2 million people died in 22 wars.

In the conflicts since 1945, only conventional—and sometimes chemical and biological—weapons have been used. A handful of countries have, however, continued to develop and stockpile new generations of nuclear weapons.

- **Five countries are recognized as ''nuclear-weapon States'': the United States (1945), the Soviet Union (1949), the United Kingdom (1957), France (1960) and China (1964). A number of other countries are believed to be capable of producing atomic weapons.**
- **The total stock of nuclear weapons in the world now amounts to some 15,000 megatons: roughly equivalent to more than 1 million Hiroshima bombs.**
- **World military expenditures peaked at about $900 billion in 1987. With recent improvements in the international political climate, countries' military budgets have started to fall.**

- **Industrialized countries account for about 80 per cent of global military expenditure.**
- **The Soviet Union and the United States together account for nearly one fourth of the world's armed forces, 60 per cent of its military spending, over 80 per cent of weapons research and 97 per cent of nuclear weapons.**
- **Arms transfers to developing countries are estimated at some $30 billion a year.**
- **Well over 70 million people, including some 25 million in the world's regular armed forces, are engaged directly or indirectly in military activities.**

What would happen if we had a major nuclear war?

Yumiko Yamamoto was only 10, a fifth grade pupil at Yagami elementary school in Nagasaki, when the bombing took place. Eleven years later, at the age of 21, she was married. A son was born two years later and a daughter the following year.

Junko Mine, her daughter, began to suffer bleeding in the nose after finishing elementary school. In April 1974, she died of leukaemia.

Eleven years later Yumiko lost her son, too. Like Junko, he suffered from chronic nosebleeds and died of leukaemia. The date was 6 August 1975, the thirtieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

What would happen if two thirds of the world's nuclear weapons were used, half of them exploding over cities?

Experts involved in a 1987-88 UN study concluded that nuclear war on this scale would immediately kill over 1 billion people. As many people might be injured, and more affected in the subsequent months. It would also entail a high risk of environmental disruption. Smoke and dust in the atmosphere would reduce sunlight and warmth reaching the Earth's surface; temperatures would be so low that they could affect crop growth. The protective layer of ozone in the atmosphere would also be depleted, leaving the Earth vulnerable to increased ultraviolet radiation.

The suffering of the survivors would be unparalleled.

Weapons of mass destruction

The devastation of nuclear weapons is rivalled by the death and destruction possible with chemical, bacteriological and conventional weapons. Like nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons are considered *weapons of mass destruction*.

- ***Chemical weapons* such as nerve gas can cause almost instantaneous death. Binary weapons, which consist of two chemical agents that are not highly toxic independently but become so in combination, are also lethal.**
- ***Biological weapons*, based on microbial or other living organisms or toxins, can cause slow, painful death to thousands if used in densely populated areas.**

- ***Conventional weapons* include "traditional" weapons used on land, sea and in the air. The world arsenal of conventional weapons was recently estimated at 140,000 main battle-tanks, 35,000 combat aircraft, 21,000 helicopters, 1,000 major surface warships and 900 attack submarines. Over *80 per cent of all military expenditure is spent on conventional weapons and forces.***

Although nuclear tests in *outer space* were prohibited by treaty as early as 1963, the 1980s saw increased concern over the arms race in outer space. In recent years some scientists and policy-makers have proposed that emerging space technologies such as lasers and particle-beam devices might make it possible to build an effective system for strategic defence. The objective of the system would be to destroy missiles armed with nuclear weapons during their boost phase, and warheads in mid-flight or as they re-enter the atmosphere heading towards their assigned targets. Other scientists and political leaders point to the enormous technical obstacles that stand in the way of developing such a system and question committing the astronomical sums it would require.

Disarmament + Development = Security: A formula for life

Take a minute to count from 1 to 60. By the time you finish, the world has lost about 30 children to malnutrition, hunger and curable diseases. During the same time, the world has also spent $1.7 million for military purposes.

Countries' preoccupation with security has fuelled the arms race. Military spending reduces the limited resources available for promoting economic and social development in many societies. Various estimates have been made about the economic and social costs of the arms race. For example, it costs as much:

- **to arm and train one soldier as it does to educate 80 children;**
- **to build one modern bomber as it did to wipe out smallpox over a 10-year period;**
- **to build the latest nuclear-missile submarine as it does to build 450,000 homes.**

At the current rate, the entire UN system could run for two centuries on one year's outlay of the world's military spending.

Arms accumulation and economic development both require large-scale human and material resources. But since resources are limited, pursuit of either process tends to be at the expense of the other. There is a growing consensus that, in the long run, the world can either continue to pursue the arms race or achieve and sustain social and economic development for the benefit of all. It cannot do both.

Armed conflicts are not the only threats to a country's security. Today, hunger, malnutrition and disease kill as many people in two days as the Hiroshima bomb. Even if only a fraction of military spending were redirected to peaceful purposes, living standards and economic and social development would significantly improve.

Direct allocation of significant resources released by disarmament to development is not imminent, but progress towards disarmament would increase the resource pool and influence the choices available to decision-makers.

Disarmament for development

Broadly understood, *"disarmament"* is a process of reducing the size of and expenditures on armed forces, dismantling and destroying weapons, progressively eliminating the capacity to produce new weapons, and releasing military personnel and integrating them into civilian life. *"Development"* refers to social and economic changes in society which improve the quality of life for all.

Policy-makers in some countries oppose the use of the word "disarmament", partly because it is assumed to mean discarding weapons altogether, and partly because they view it as too narrow a term. They prefer the expression *"arms control"*: a régime regulating, constraining or reducing weapons and military activities according to the terms of specific policies or agreements. Other countries have maintained that "arms control" does not necessarily imply a commitment to limit and reduce arms, and favour the term "disarmament".

"Security" is a condition in which States feel protected against actual, potential or perceived threats to their independence, sovereignty and political institutions. In the absence of an effective guarantee of their security, nations continue to seek security in military terms by exercising their inherent right of individual or collective self-defence.

Growing global interdependence may lead to a new, non-military perception of security. Poor or negative economic growth and social development, large-scale unemployment, scarcity of resources, threats to food and energy supplies and severe environmental degradation can jeopardize both national and international security.

Disarmament may actually enhance security. It is widely recognized that a State's military strength cannot go beyond its economic base, and that a widening gap between the two is a serious security problem. Besides, no State can ultimately ensure its own security at the cost of another State's security—real or perceived. Joint actions by States to tackle non-military threats to security, coupled with efforts towards disarmament, improve prospects for a more secure world. Also, arms limitation agreements, both at the regional and global levels, would cost little in comparison with the continuation of the arms race.

Disarmament alone will not erase the threat of war or ensure peace. As Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's former President, said:

▶ **"War is not caused by weapons; these are simply implements used in war. Real and sustainable peace is therefore not obtained simply by abolishing armaments. For the basis of war is injustice; and the foundation of real peace is justice and equality."**

By providing a mechanism for preventing and defusing international conflicts, and promoting economic and social development and respect for human rights, the United Nations works towards establishing the conditions that make disarmament and peace possible.

The United Nations as a forum for disarmament

General and complete disarmament under effective international control remains a main goal of the UN. Its immediate objectives are to eliminate the danger of war, particularly nuclear war, and to implement measures to halt and reverse the arms race, clearing the path towards lasting peace.

The *General Assembly*, the UN's main deliberative body, considers all international security and disarmament questions. The *Disarmament Commission*, a subsidiary body of the Assembly consisting of all Member States, provides an annual forum for discussion of disarmament issues. In recent years, the Assembly has adopted some 60 resolutions per year on such issues. Various committees and working groups of the Assembly are active in disarmament matters.

- **Within the UN Secretariat, the *Department for Disarmament Affairs* provides support services to the bodies concerned with disarmament, by preparing reports and supervising research and studies. It co-ordinates a world campaign for disarmament launched in 1982 to promote world-wide support and understanding for arms limitation and disarmament, and the work of three UN regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa, Asia and Latin America.**

- **An autonomous *UN Institute for Disarmament Research* at Geneva, financed by voluntary contributions, carries out independent research on disarmament and related problems, particularly international security issues.**

The General Assembly has devoted three special sessions to the question of disarmament.

- **The *first special session on disarmament (SSOD I*, 1978) stressed the UN's central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament. It called for a comprehensive programme of disarmament towards the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. A single multilateral forum for the negotiation of disarmament issues, the Conference on Disarmament, an independent multilateral negotiating body served by the Secretariat, was created following the session. The Conference, which includes all 5 nuclear-weapon States, 7 Western States, 7 Eastern European and socialist States and 21 non-aligned States, meets in Geneva for six months each year.**

- **At *SSOD II* (1982) the Assembly expressed profound preoccupation about the danger of war, particularly nuclear war, and urged Member States to consider as soon as possible proposals to avoid it. It also stressed the need to strengthen the UN's role in the field of disarmament.**

- ***SSOD III* (1988) produced a clearer understanding of the desire and need for multilateralism in disarmament. The session, however, failed to adopt a final declaration due to lack of consensus.**

At the end of the third special session, The Secretary-General outlined the elements of the common outlook on disarmament as follows:

- **Disarmament is a joint undertaking of all States, not the exclusive responsibility of the two super-Powers.**
- **Nuclear disarmament remains a primary concern, but conventional disarmament has acquired a new urgency.**
- **National security needs to be viewed in the broader context of global issues and international concerns.**
- **The goal of disarmament must be pursued in conjunction with efforts to resolve conflicts, build confidence and promote social and economic development.**
- **The existing machinery for disarmament can and should be better utilized.**

United Nations action in the field of disarmament

There is often widespread agreement at the UN on the desirability of objectives, but negotiations, particularly on disarmament proposals, are extremely complex. The parties are sovereign States. Each perceives the issues of security—and disarmament—from a national point of view. As a result, efforts towards substantial disarmament have never met with easy success.

The UN has played a role, either as negotiating forum or catalyst, in the conclusion of a number of arms control or disarmament agreements:

- **The *Antarctic Treaty* (1959) prohibits in the Antarctic zone any military manoeuvres, weapons tests, building of military installations or disposal of radioactive wastes produced by military activities. The Treaty represented the first practical expression of the concept of the "nuclear-free zone" later applied to the sea-bed, outer space and Latin America.**
- **The *Partial Test-Ban Treaty* (1963) prohibits nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.**
- **The *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (1968) prohibits the spread of nuclear weapons from nuclear to non-nuclear countries, while facilitating the exchange of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; and commits the nuclear-weapon States to negotiate measures to end the nuclear arms race. The Treaty also established an international system of safeguards, implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency, aimed at preventing the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful purposes to nuclear weapons.**
- **The *Sea-Bed Treaty* (1971) bans the placement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction on or under the sea-bed, outside a 12-mile coastal zone around each country.**
- **The *Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons* (1972) is considered the first international agreement providing for genuine disarmament—that is, the destruction of existing weapons.**
- **The *Convention on Excessively Injurious or Indiscriminate Weapons* (1981) restricts or prohibits the use of mines and booby traps, incendiary weapons, and weapons which injure or kill their victims by fragments which X-rays cannot detect in the human body.**

Towards a complete chemical weapons ban

The UN Conference on Disarmament is the main forum for multilateral negotiations towards a convention on chemical weapons which would ban their development, production, stockpiling and use, and provide for their destruction.

- **The *Geneva Protocol of 1925* bans the use in war of poisonous gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare. This Protocol reaffirms previous agreements banning the use of chemical weapons and extends the ban to cover the use of bacteriological (biological) weapons. It does not, however, ban their development, production or stockpiling, nor does it provide for mechanisms and procedures in case of violations.**

Evidence that chemical weapons have been used on a number of occasions in recent years has given a new sense of urgency to the negotiations.

- **Since 1984, the UN Secretary-General has dispatched several expert missions to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons, and has reported to the Member States on his findings. The Security Council and the General Assembly have supported his efforts. In August 1988, the Security Council unanimously condemned the use of chemical weapons in the war between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and encouraged the Secretary-General to investigate promptly any allegations of use of chemical or biological weapons in violation of the Geneva Protocol.**

In January 1990, the Government of France (the depository Power of the 1925 Protocol) convened in Paris an international conference on chemical weapons. At the conference, 149 States condemned the use of chemical weapons, affirmed their commitment not to use them and urged the UN Conference on Disarmament to speed up its negotiations on a comprehensive ban. In the conference's final consensus statement, the participating States expressed their "full support" for the Secretary-General and for the UN's "indispensable role" as an instrument to monitor the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons.

Despite overwhelming support for the proposed convention, a number of serious problems remain, including the question of verification. Chemical weapons, often called "the poor man's atom bomb", are relatively easy to make. Factories which produce a variety of chemical substances can easily be transformed into facilities for producing chemical weapons. As a result, verifying compliance with a complete chemical weapons ban is an extremely complex matter.

Building confidence

In recent years, the UN General Assembly has attached increasing importance to measures aimed at building mutual confidence between countries in military and security matters. Steps to promote greater openness about military activities, and to foster development and exchange of objective information on military capabilities and expenditures, are among the UN initiatives aimed at strengthening peace and security.

- **Interest in confidence building measures (CBM) has grown since the concept was first introduced in the 1975 Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.**

▶ **In 1988, a set of guidelines adopted by the General Assembly reaffirmed the need for CBM to strengthen international peace and security and reduce the risk of accidental war.**

Verification—the process of providing the parties to an arms limitation or disarmament agreement machinery to monitor and confirm compliance with the agreement—has taken on particular importance. In the 1978 Final Document of SSOD I, the General Assembly declared that disarmament agreements "should provide for adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned, in order to create the necessary confidence and ensure that they are being observed by all parties".

Although total verifiability of agreements is unlikely, without reliable verification there can be little hope of maintaining confidence in compliance.

▶ **UN disarmament discussions have aired a variety of proposals for verification machinery—from arrangements custom-designed to meet the requirements of specific treaties, to the establishment of an international verification agency staffed to meet the demands of different treaties. The question of the feasibility of establishing an international satellite monitoring agency for the purpose of verifying arms and security agreements has also been raised.**

"Peace dividend"

Improved bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and reduced tensions between East and West offer the prospect of progress in arms limitation talks and improved prospects for further conventional and nuclear arms reductions. The two super-Powers have already signed an Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (1987) providing for the elimination of an entire generation of nuclear missiles.

Bilateral talks are already under way towards cuts in the two countries' strategic arsenals, as well as short-range nuclear weapons in Europe. Significant progress has also been made in talks between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact countries on reducing conventional armed forces in Europe.

Current changes in East-West relations have also opened the door to significant reductions in world military spending. Discussion has turned to the potential of using these newly freed resources, the so-called "peace dividend", for economic and social development.

▶ **Speaking to a colloquium at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in March 1990, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs noted that the process of sharing the cake has already got off to a quick start—"even though the cake itself has not yet even been put into the oven". However disarmament may proceed in the next few years, he added, it would be increasingly interactive with evolving notions of security.**

A number of Governments have suggested that at least some of the benefits of disarmament should be used to increase assistance to developing countries. Others have pointed to the costs of verifying disarmament measures, as well as domestic costs of economic adjustment for educa-

tion, retraining, increased social welfare, and many other competing demands likely to accompany the slow-down or elimination of arms-related industries.

As countries work towards the goal of enhanced security, a way must be found to do both: to ensure that the needs of the developing world are not forgotten as resources are redirected from the military to the non-military sectors.

Some four decades ago, Albert Einstein said, "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be acheived by understanding." After more than 40 years of "cold war" and the bipolarization that accompanied it, the world seems to be heading towards better understanding and co-operation. People are coming to realize that new forms of security are needed to respond to new kinds of threats—not threats from other countries, but common threats to humanity.

HUMAN RIGHTS

UNITED NATIONS

"It can be predicted with confidence that respect for human rights will be one of the principal themes in both national and international life in the coming decade . . . The yearning of peoples all over the world for their basic human dignity and their growing demand for the fulfilment of their human rights constitute political facts of paramount importance. We have but to look at various situations of conflict around the globe to see how discrimination and the denial of fundamental rights engender resentment and violence that tear apart the fabric of peace."

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Message on the occasion of the
41st anniversary of the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights,
10 December 1989

The founders of the United Nations reacted to human rights abuses which preceded the Second World War, and to atrocities unveiled as the war drew to a close, by emphasizing human rights in the Organization's Charter. The Charter refers repeatedly to such concepts as "fundamental human rights", "the dignity and worth of the human person", "equal rights", "justice", "social progress", and "fundamental freedoms", and dedicates three chapters to the self-determination of peoples—the right of people everywhere to govern themselves.

Genesis of an idea

The evolution of modern concepts of human rights is often associated with such prominent Western thinkers as Goethe, Locke, Paine, Rousseau and Thoreau. But the roots of intellectual inquiry into the laws that govern human and State behaviour may be traced back to other, non-Western sources.

▶ **The Upanishads, ancient texts from the Indian subcontinent dating back to 800 B.C., are said to have influenced Greek philosophers at the time and, through them, St. Augustine. They are a discourse on the need for the individual's absence of fear, and the search for truth and freedom.**

▶ **The Chinese philosopher Mencius said 2,000 years ago: "When a ruler treats his subjects like grass and dirt, then subjects should treat him as a bandit and an enemy." Even when a ruling class had final say over what rights the people were entitled to, individuals and groups were deemed to have certain rights, as well as certain obligations, determined and protected by customary law.**

The Covenant of the League of Nations, written at the end of the First World War, was silent on the issue of human rights. But British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had, at the beginning of the Second World War, already described the conflict as one "to establish, on impregnable rocks, the rights of the individual". The *Dumbarton Oaks* proposals elaborated in the closing days of the Second World War—and the precursors to the UN Charter—merely stated in general terms that the United Nations would "promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedom". But they fell far short of meeting the expectations of an aroused public opinion which needed assurances against the repetition of the atrocities of the war.

▶ **At the *San Francisco Conference* some 40 groups representing churches, trade unions and ethnic organizations joined forces with delegations favouring more specific language, some even calling for an international bill of rights in the Charter. This determined lobby conducted by non-governmental organizations and smaller countries at the San Francisco Conference resulted in relatively strong provisions on human rights being incorporated into the Charter, laying the foundation for the post-1945 era of international law-making.**

Supporting pillars

A mere three years after the UN began work, the General Assembly put into place the first supporting pillar of 20th century human rights law.

▶ **The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted on 10 December 1948, was intended as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples". Its 30 articles spell out basic civil and political rights and fundamental economic, social and cultural rights which human beings in every country should enjoy. Often thought of as a latter-day *Magna Carta*, the Universal Declaration is generally considered to have the weight of customary international law because it is so widely accepted and used as a yardstick for measuring the conduct of States. Many newly independent countries have cited the Universal Declaration or included its provisions in their basic laws or constitutions.**

▶ **The broadest legally binding human rights agreements negotiated by the UN are two *International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and on *Civil and Political Rights*, the latter with two *Optional Protocols* which deal with recourse procedures and the death penalty. These agreements take the provisions of the Universal Declaration a step further by making them binding upon States parties. More than half the world's countries are parties to the two Covenants, thereby opening the door to international monitoring of their human rights practices.**

Together, these three instruments are known as the *International Bill of Human Rights* and have served as the inspiration for some 60 conventions and declarations that have been concluded within the UN on a wide range of issues.

These include:

- **The *Genocide Convention* (1948), a direct response to the atrocities of the Second World War, defines genocide as the commission of certain acts with intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group for which no political defence can be upheld.**
- **The *Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* (1965) is one of the most widely ratified treaties, with 129 parties as of April 1990. It finds any policy of racial superiority based on racial differences unjustifiable, scientifically false and morally condemnable.**
- **The *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (1979) specifies measures to eliminate discrimination against women with respect to political and public life, nationality, education, employment, health, marriage and the family.**
- **The *Convention against Torture* (1984) defines torture as an international crime, holds parties accountable for preventing torture and makes it legally punishable. No exceptional circumstances may be invoked to justify torture, nor may a torturer offer a defence of having acted under orders.**

Several regional agreements, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter of Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples, have been inspired by the Universal Declaration and other UN efforts.

Protecting the most vulnerable

The latest advance in the cause of human rights is the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The promotion of separate rights for children is a comparatively modern development. Not until the reform movements of the 19th century did the State accept responsibility for protecting the child against the power of parents, economic exploitation or social neglect. In the pre-UN era, the rights of children were seen primarily in the context of measures against slavery, child labour, prostitution and the sale of minors. After several decades, the UN has brought the rights of children within an all-encompassing document.

On 20 November 1989, the General Assembly adopted the Convention after putting finishing touches to its legal wording. The 54-article Convention seeks to assure children the right to life, to a name and a nationality, and to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. It represents an unprecedented attempt to address the problems of child abuse and neglect in an international treaty, and pays special attention to protection of children who are refugees, disabled or belong to minorities. States parties commit themselves to efforts to provide primary health care and basic education.

The Convention will enter into force only when 20 countries ratify it. As of April 1990, 85 countries had signed the treaty and 4 had ratified it (Ecuador, Ghana, the Holy See and Viet Nam). A Committee of 10 experts to monitor compliance with the Convention's provisions will be elected by States parties to the treaty. Since ratification is a slow process, some countries and organizations have gone ahead with measures to give effect to the Convention's provisions.

- **Costa Rica has created a post of Ombudsman for children's rights and appointed a professor of criminal law to the new portfolio.**
- **The Organization of African Unity has endorsed the drafting of an African Charter for Children.**

The death penalty: no easy issue

After years of studying countries' laws and practices relating to capital punishment and its effect on crime rates, in 1968 the General Assembly invited Member States to ensure "the most careful legal procedures and the greatest possible safeguards" for persons condemned to death. Since 1980, the Assembly has considered proposals for developing a legal standard aimed at abolishing the death penalty. In 1984, the Economic and Social Council adopted guidelines on the rights of prisoners facing the death penalty, and the Human Rights Commission's Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities asked that a Special Rapporteur analyse prospects for an additional optional protocol to ban capital punishment, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The *Second Optional Protocol* was finalized and adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1989.

Extensive debate preceded the conclusion of the new international instrument. Some parties opposed abolishing capital punishment which they considered entirely consistent with their national and religious laws and customs and a deterrent to crime. The Second Optional Protocol provides countries a route for abolishing the death penalty should they so desire. As of April 1990 it had been signed by15 countries and ratified by one (New Zealand).

Many irons in the fire

UN efforts have firmly established human rights as a legitimate concern of the international community. But there is no cause for complacency. The Secretary-General has pointed out that the international community must guard against new forms of discrimination even as it combats old prejudices. New doors are constantly being opened—often with the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—as the UN presses to define specific rights and violations, to prepare legal documents that set standards and to monitor their implementation.

- ***Migrant workers* may be defined as persons not nationals of the State in which they are economically active. States are free to admit a foreigner or to refuse him, to place conditions on his stay and on his activities. Since 1981, the General Assembly has been elaborating a new instrument to protect both regular and undocumented migrant workers and their families. This document would expand protection to frontier workers, special assignment workers and those who are self-employed, expanding on existing International Labour Organisation (ILO) treaties covering certain categories of migrant workers. The Assembly's Working Group on the Rights of Migrant Workers has nearly completed a draft which may be ready for adoption this year.**

The rights of *indigenous peoples* are receiving increased attention. Indian, aboriginal and tribal groups have brought their concerns to the attention of the UN Human Rights Commission. A Working Group of its Sub-Commission annually reviews the situation of indigenous peoples and is preparing a universal declaration on their rights. Increasingly, indigenous people are

contributing directly to the Working Group's discussions. This increased attention to the problems faced by indigenous peoples has led to a rethinking of some existing human rights instruments. In 1986, ILO embarked on a revision of its 1957 convention to address concerns over provisions which suggested assimilation, and to encourage communication between Governments and indigenous groups.

- ***Enforced or involuntary disappearances.*** **The chain of events is depressingly familiar: an individual goes missing or is detained without trial, subjected to torture and held incommunicado. Information on the person's whereabouts is unavailable to friends and family, and due process is disregarded. The family's anguish is aggravated by the fear that the disappearance will result, almost certainly, in death.**

- **Faced with growing evidence of disappearances in the 1970s, the General Assembly devoted special attention to this phenomenon, leading to the establishment of a Working Group of the Human Rights Commission in 1980. The Working Group developed a new mechanism for dealing with complaints about such human rights violations.**

- **It receives reports on disappearances submitted by relatives of missing persons or human rights organizations acting on their behalf and, as long as certain criteria are met, acts as a channel of communication between missing persons' families and Governments—irrespective of whether a State is party to any specific human rights agreement. On a number of occasions, the Working Group has visited countries to obtain first-hand information and allow direct contact with affected families, and discussions with the authorities. A useful dialogue is sometimes initiated and prompt action by the Chairman can succeed in saving lives. El Salvador, the Philippines and Sri Lanka invited missions by the Working Group in the past year. During 1989, the Working Group received some 2,700 reports on enforced or involuntary disappearances. Add to these the information received in previous years and the total number of its cases is more like 19,000, in about 41 countries.**

Among the many "irons in the fire"—human rights standards under scrutiny—are those pertaining to arbitrary and summary executions, religious intolerance, mercenarism and its impact on human rights, the sale of children, child pornography and prostitution, contemporary forms of slavery, the rights of non-citizens, minorities, traditional practices affecting women and children, and the right to development.

Many unsung heroes

Addressing a group of NGO representatives at UN Headquarters, a senior UN official recently observed that the world is witnessing a metamorphosis: "security is being decoupled from secrecy". By extension, it can be argued that national security concerns can no longer be a pretext for denying fundamental liberties to the individual. Information is an increasingly potent weapon against human rights abuses, strengthening the partnership between the UN and the NGO community in unmasking violations of human rights. As the Secretary-General has said, "In the denunciation of abuses, the United Nations is well aware of its debt to the many organizations with which it works." Amnesty International, the International Federation of Democratic Lawyers and the International Commission of Jurists are among the many groups

that submit information to UN bodies and advance the cause of human rights. This is a task that not only requires objectivity but often calls for courage, and many unsung heroes are to be given the credit for keeping the flame of hope alive.

Stand up for your rights

The key to advancing respect for human rights is for individuals to be conscious of their human rights and to spread awareness in the community. Information can be a strong deterrent in a world where countries are increasingly sensitive to public embarrassment and denunciation.

- **The UN *Centre for Human Rights* located in Geneva, Switzerland, with a small New York liaison office, is a clearing-house for communications from individuals, NGOs and Governments on a multitude of human rights issues. The Centre is the permanent secretariat for the Human Rights Commission and its related bodies. It has launched a world public information campaign on human rights in order to educate people about their rights and their countries' responsibilities. Governments are the main actors when it comes to implementing rights, but individuals and organizations may also voice their concerns through UN human rights bodies.**

For over 20 years, the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Minorities have been authorized to discuss the human rights situation in any part of the world. In 1970 the Economic and Social Council enhanced this power by authorizing these bodies to examine confidentially information from individuals, NGOs and other sources which reveals a consistent pattern of gross human rights violations. (This is commonly referred to as the *"1503 procedure"* for the number assigned to the Council resolution which authorized it.) While preserving the confidentiality of the information before it, the Commission tries to establish a dialogue with the Government concerned in order to obtain clarifications or improve the situation.

- **The Commission may eventually decide to launch an *investigation by objective experts or appoint a special rapporteur* to delve further into the situation. In the past 10 years, confidential measures under the "1503 procedure" have been used to examine human rights situations in some 30 countries. At the Commission's initiative, special rapporteurs and representatives have examined and prepared reports on human rights situations in a dozen countries.**

- **In 1990, human rights situations in *Afghanistan, Cambodia, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Haiti, Iran, Paraguay, Romania, southern Lebanon, the Israeli-occupied territories and southern Africa* were discussed in open sessions of the Human Rights Commission.**

- **At the 1989 session of the Sub-Commission on Minorities, the situation in *China* was also reviewed. The Sub-Commission asked the Secretary-General to transmit information provided by the Chinese Government and other reliable sources to the Human Rights Commission, while at the same time it appealed for clemency for those deprived of their liberty.**

- **In the case of *Cuba*, the Commission has welcomed the Secretary-General's willingness to pursue contacts with the Cuban Government to follow up on the findings of a 1988 visit by members of the Commission.**

The role and scope of UN action in promoting human rights are frequently misunderstood. The UN's ultimate constituents, the "peoples" of the United Nations in whose name the Charter was written, should be aware that they *have* rights, *what* those rights are and *how* the Organization has attempted to bring enjoyment of human rights within their reach:

- ***As global conscience:*** **The UN has set the pace in establishing minimum standards of acceptable behaviour by nations, and keeping the attention of the international community focused on human rights practices which threaten to undermine those standards.**

- **As lawmaker: A remarkable codification of international law has taken place. Rights as disparate as those pertaining to women, children, prisoners and detainees, the mentally disabled, and violations such as genocide, racial discrimination and torture, have been brought within the international rule of law.**

- ***As monitor:*** **The UN has played a central role in ensuring that human rights are not just discussed in the abstract but are put into practice. The International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are among the earliest examples of treaties that empower international bodies to monitor how States live up to their commitments.**

- ***As forum of appeal:*** **Under the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, States that accede to the Protocol permit complaints by individuals to be brought to the attention of the Human Rights Committee under a confidential procedure, once all domestic legal processes have been exhausted. Also, at public hearings of the Human Rights Commission, its Sub-Commission on Minorities and their Working Groups, certain NGOs have been given the right to raise issues of concern to which Governments usually respond.**

- ***As fact-finder:*** **The original mandate of the Commission on Human Rights—to examine situations where massive violations of rights appear to be taking place—has been complemented by a new function: compiling information on the incidence of certain kinds of violations, or violations in a specific country. The envoys entrusted with this politically sensitive and sometimes dangerous task are *Special Rapporteurs*. They gather facts, keep contact with local groups and Government authorities, conduct on-site visits when Governments permit, and make recommendations on how human rights institutions might be strengthened. Special Rapporteurs are currently reporting on *Afghanistan, Chile, El Salvador, Iran* and *Romania*.**

- ***As discreet diplomat:*** **The Commission on Human Rights may ask the *Secretary-General* to intervene or send an expert to examine a human rights situation with a view to preventing flagrant violations or perhaps even deaths. Such attempts at quiet diplomacy are also undertaken by the Secretary-General in the exercise of his *good offices* and may establish the UN's legitimate concern and curb abuses.**

- ***As adviser:*** **The *Centre for Human Rights* provides advisory services to Governments seeking to improve their human rights performance. Assistance may be given to draft a constitution, improve electoral laws, establish or upgrade human rights institutions, prepare new criminal codes or overhaul the judiciary.**

- ***As nerve-centre:*** **In 1989 the *Centre for Human Rights* received a record *300,000 communications* from groups and individuals claiming violations of their human rights. (In recent years, it has received 50,000 to 80,000 such communications annually.) The Centre refers these communications to the appropriate UN organs, taking into account the implementation procedures established by conventions and resolutions.**

- ***As researcher:*** **The data compiled by the UN on human rights issues is indispensable to the development of human rights law. For example, some 80 country studies provided the basis of an instrument being drafted to protect the rights of indigenous groups. Another controversial issue, female sexual mutilation, was taken up in the late 1970s and a Special Rapporteur now studies developments in this field.**

- ***As an education and training service:*** **The *Centre for Human Rights* provides fellowships and scholarships to qualified persons responsible for protecting human rights in their countries. It recently arranged for candidates to attend courses in regional human rights institutes, such as the International Institute on Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in San José, Costa Rica. Regional seminars and training courses organized by the Centre for members of the judiciary, lawyers, police officers and educators in various countries are aimed at strengthening human rights institutions.**

The human rights umbrella

Other parts of the UN system also undertake specialized human rights activities. The *UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)* has earned a reputation for its advocacy of the rights of children and continues to play its part in publicizing the recently adopted Convention on those rights. The *Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees* has extended legal protection and humanitarian assistance to millions of refugees over the years. A *Commission on the Status of Women* is the key deliberative body when it comes to elaborating women's rights. Other organizations in the UN system have carried out ground-breaking efforts: the *International Labour Organisation* has concluded over 300 treaties on the rights of workers, while the *UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* is responsible for studies, conventions and recommendations on human rights in its fields of work.

Apartheid: a unique human rights problem

As a practice and as an issue before the United Nations, *apartheid* is unique. As a system of consitutionally-embodied racial discrimination, it violates basic human rights on a massive scale, denying to a vast majority of non-white South Africans equal rights with whites. *Apartheid* has been on the General Assembly's agenda since 1946 and has been declared incompatible with the UN Charter by both the Assembly and the Security Council. In November 1977, the Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa, determining that its aggressions against its neighbours and its potential nuclear capability constituted a threat to international peace and security—the first time the Council has taken such action taken against a UN Member State.

The UN has been instrumental in keeping *apartheid* on the international agenda and in the public eye. Over the years, the Assembly's *Special Committee against Apartheid* has initiated measures to exert pressure and to isolate the Pretoria regime. These actions have included urging States to implement and monitor economic sanctions, as well as an oil embargo, and a boycott of cultural and sports ties. The Secretariat's *Centre against Apartheid* has provided support services to the Committee and spearheaded a public information campaign. The *Commission on Human Rights* has investigated and publicized charges of ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees in South Africa.

Each year the UN observes 21 March as the *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, marking a massacre of 69 unarmed civilians by South African police at Sharpeville in 1960.

In December 1989, at a special session on *apartheid*, the General Assembly unanimously adopted by consensus the *UN Declaration on South Africa*. In the context of fast-moving events in South Africa, such as Pretoria's decision to lift the ban on the African National Congress and release some political prisoners—among them Nelson Mandela—the Declaration sets out the preconditions for creating the climate needed for negotiations. They include the unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees, the removal of restrictions on banned persons and organizations, the withdrawal of troops from townships, the cessation of political trials and executions, and an end to the state of emergency and related legislation. Even as talks have begun between the South African authorities and the anti-*apartheid* opposition, the United Nations is firm in continuing its support to the national liberation movements until the eventual goal of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa is achieved.

The rights of Palestinians

Since the failure to implement the General Assembly's 1947 partition plan for Palestine and its 1948 resolution articulating the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation for their lost or damaged property, the rights of Palestinians have been a special concern of the United Nations. Since 1969 the Assembly has taken a stand on the "inalienable rights of the people of Palestine", including their right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. The Assembly's *Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People* has recommended a programme to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights and to bring about a solution to the question of Palestine. The Committee's recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in 1976 but they have not been accepted by the Security Council. A *Division for Palestinian Rights* serves as secretariat to the Committee.

The question of "the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine" has been on the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights since 1969. A Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories draws up a report each year which serves as a basis for discussion. Israel has refused to co-operate with the Special Committee since the General Assembly established

it in 1968, maintaining that its mandate is one-sided and discriminatory, and that it prejudges the issues.

1988 was a year when the uprising against Israeli occupation—the *intifadah*—brought into sharp international focus the question of human rights for the Palestinian population of the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. In 1989 the General Assembly reaffirmed that the occupation itself constituted "a grave violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people", and condemned Israel's failure to comply with the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of war.

Human rights: A job for the UN

The UN is firmly identified in the public mind and the international community with the struggle for human rights.

- **Of the nearly 30,000 treaties registered with the UN Secretariat, only 5 per cent are multilateral. However, virtually all international agreements concerning human rights are multilateral and 40 per cent of all acts of ratification of human rights instruments (the legal step taken by countries to become parties to international agreements) are for agreements negotiated under UN auspices.**
- **Public opinion polls conducted in 1989 in the European Community countries and Canada for the UN Department of Public Information found that the public ranks the UN's handling of human rights second only in importance to its role in the environment.**

In 1989 the General Assembly called for the Secretary-General to explore the possibility of holding a world conference on human rights. The head of the UN's human rights programme has described this decision as a timely opportunity for stock-taking and a political development of great significance. Almost half a century after the UN opened a new chapter in human rights law, the world's people are testing the commitment of their leaders to the principles of human rights as never before.

DECOLONIZATION

UNITED NATIONS

"Revised final returns show that over 97 per cent of the Namibians who were registered to vote took the opportunity to exercise their long-awaited and fundamental democratic right. . . . Its youngest democracy has given the whole world a signal lesson in democracy, exemplary as to commitment, restraint and tolerance. Accordingly, in this election there have been no losers. I hereby certify that the electoral process in Namibia has at each stage been free and fair. . . "

Martti Ahtisaari, Special Representative
of the Secretary-General for Namibia, at a
press conference following elections to Namibia's
Constituent Assembly, November 1989

On 23 April 1990, a crowd gathered outside the General Assembly building at UN Headquarters in New York to witness a historic event. They cheered and applauded as, for the first time, the flag of the new nation of Namibia was raised alongside those of the 159 other UN Members. Just one month after the people of Namibia had gained their hard-won independence from South Africa, their country took its place in the international community as the UN's 160th* Member State.

Namibia's independence was a triumph for its people. For more than a century they had been dominated by foreign rulers. In the hands of South Africa for nearly 70 years, they suffered the indignities and repression of *apartheid*. In November 1989, Namibians went to the polls under UN supervision to choose representatives to a Constituent Assembly in their first free and fair elections. The UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which supervised and controlled the electoral process conducted by the South African administration and the transfer

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* Two Member States, Democratic Yemen and Yemen, united in June 1990, reducing the UN's total membership to 159 States, including Namibia.

power in the Territory, demonstrated the UN's commitment to the principle of self-determination. UNTAG ensured that discriminatory laws and practices were brought to an end; monitored the registration of voters; supervised the design of free and fair voting procedures; protected citizens from intimidation; maintained the peace; and with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, helped refugees to return home. Perhaps most importantly in a country which had never experienced a free election, UNTAG's presence reassured individuals that their votes counted, that they had a right to participate in the government of their country—and that the world was watching.

The UNTAG operation was unprecedented in its character and complexity. But it built on more than four decades of UN experience in decolonization, as well as peace-making, peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance. To a large extent, the story of Namibia's struggle for independence, and UN efforts to help bring it about, is the story of how the notion of the right to self-determination—the right of people living under colonial administration to govern themselves—became a driving force of the 20th century.

▶ **Since 1955, the UN has supervised or observed elections and referendums on some 40 occasions. In many of these instances, people in non-self-governing territories voted for the first time to approve national constitutions or elect representatives to constituent assemblies, or to decide their future political status. On several occasions the inhabitants of disputed territories have been able to express their wishes through plebiscites under UN supervision, providing for a peaceful resolution to the dispute.**

The power of an idea whose time has come

The UN Charter, drafted at the close of the Second World War, for the first time in history committed the world's Governments to ending colonialism. In three chapters devoted to non-self-governing territories, the Charter established the principles which have served as the thin end of the wedge, promoting the right of colonial peoples to govern themselves, and opening the way for efforts to make sure that States which administer territories respect that right. The principles initially spelled out in the Charter in 1945 were later amplified in another landmark document, the General Assembly's 1960 Declaration on decolonization, formally titled the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*.

The *Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories*—Chapter XI of the Charter—sets out the obligations of all UN Member States administering dependent territories. It states that "the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount". It emphasizes the importance, not only of their economic and social development, but also of their *political* advancement, including the development by the people of their own free political institutions. Chapter XI also introduces the idea of accountability: administering States are required to provide regularly to the Secretary-General information on conditions in territories under their control.

The 1960 *Declaration on decolonization* proclaimed the need to bring colonialism to a speedy and unconditional end. The Assembly declared colonialism a denial of fundamental human rights, contrary to the Charter and an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-

operation. The Declaration stressed that "Immediate steps shall be taken in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire . . . to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom". Proclaiming the right of all peoples to self-determination, the Declaration also called for an end to armed action and repressive measures against dependent peoples. To observe the 30th anniversary of the Declaration in 1990, the General Assembly has designated the final decade of this century (1990-2000) as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

A new world map

The people of non-self-governing territories, anxious to develop their own political institutions and participate in the decisions that affected their lives, found inspiration and strength in the ideals expressed in the Charter and the 1960 Declaration on decolonization. As evidence of the importance they attached to the UN, most territories that have gained their independence since the UN's establishment have joined the Organization as one of their first acts of national sovereignty. As a result, the face of the UN has changed markedly.

- **When the UN was founded, nearly one third of the world's population—some 750 million people—were living under colonial rule. Today, the total population of the remaining non-self-governing territories is around 2 million.**

- **Of the original 51 UN member countries in 1945, only 10 were in Asia and the Pacific, and only 4 were African. Thirty-nine were countries of Europe and the western hemisphere. Some 80 countries which have joined the Organization in the last 45 years were non-self-governing territories in 1945. Today's 159 UN Members include 52 African States and 41 in Asia and the Pacific.**

Self-determination under trusteeship

Chapter XII of the Charter established the *International Trusteeship System* to supervise the administration of Territories placed under it through agreements with the administering countries. The System was applicable to Territories held under Mandates established by the League of Nations; Territories detached from enemy States as a result of the Second World War; and other Territories voluntarily placed under the System by administering States. The basic objective of the System was to promote the political, economic and social advancement of the Trust Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence.

The *Trusteeship Council*, established under Chapter XIII of the Charter, supervises the administration of Trust Territories and ensures that Governments responsible for their administration take adequate steps towards achievement of the Charter goals.

- **In the early years of the United Nations, 11 Trust Territories—British Togoland, Italian Somaliland, French Togoland, French Cameroons, British Cameroons, Tanganyika, Ruanda-Urundi, Western Samoa, Nauru, New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands—were placed under the Trusteeship System through individual agreements between the UN and their administering States.**

▶ **The Assembly also recommended that Namibia, administered by South Africa under a League of Nations Mandate, be placed under the United Nations Trusteeship System. The Assembly invited South Africa to propose a trusteeship agreement for the Territory, but it refused to do so.**

The Charter not only calls for annual reports from administering States on conditions in Trust Territories, but also authorizes missions of the Trusteeship Council to visit the Territories at times agreed on with the administering States. In addition, it empowers the Council to accept petitions concerning the Territories and examine them in consultation with the administering authorities. The Council also grants oral hearings to petitioners.

▶ **Between 1957 and 1968, nine Trust Territories attained independence, or chose to join other independent States. Another (New Guinea) became independent in 1975. Currently only one Trust Territory remains under the System: the Pacific Islands. Also known as Micronesia, this Territory comprises the former Japanese-mandated islands of the Marshalls, the Marianas (with the exception of Guam) and the Carolines. The trusteeship agreement concluded with the United States in 1947 defines the Territory as a "strategic trust" under the terms of the Charter. Ultimate responsibility for terminating this agreement rests, therefore, with the Security Council.**

On the basis of information available to it, the Trusteeship Council reviews developments in the Trust Territory. It makes recommendations to the administering authority aimed at promoting political development in the Territory and improving living standards for its inhabitants. Each year the Trusteeship Council reports to the Security Council its conclusions and recommendations on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The General Assembly reviews the Council's work and makes its own recommendations, including urging the administering authority to set target dates for the Territory's achievement of full self-government or independence. The Trusteeship System provided the UN's first experiences in supervising plebiscites, referendums and elections. Several early popular votes decided the status of Trust Territories and their relationships with other territories; others were referendums on new constitutions or were held to elect constituent assemblies. In a number of cases, the System's flexibility resulted in adjustments of colonial boundaries to reflect the wishes of the populations directly concerned.

▶ **In 1955, a plebiscite overseen by the UN in British Togoland allowed the people of the Territory to declare their desire to join the non-self-governing territory of the Gold Coast, ultimately to become the new independent nation of Ghana in 1957.**

▶ **Elections under UN supervision in the Belgian-administered Territory of Ruanda-Urundi resulted in the emergence of the two independent States of Rwanda and Burundi in 1962.**

A conflict of interpretations

The application of the principles in Chapter XI of the Charter to non-self-governing territories *not* covered by the International Trusteeship System has often been the subject of intense debate.

- **Chapter XI failed to define the term "non-self-governing territory" or to specify which countries were administering Powers. While Article 73 e required administering countries to submit information on conditions in their non-self-governing territories, it set up no special mechanism to follow up on that information.**

- **Unlike Chapters XII and XIII, which committed States administering Trust Territories to promote progressive development towards self-determination or *independence*, Chapter XI referred only to the need to develop *self-government* in dependent territories.**

Some delegations insisted that the principle of international accountability should apply equally to all territories which had not achieved independence, and not just Trust Territories. As voiced by one delegate involved in the debates in the early 1950s, non-administering Powers were bound to differ from administering States, not because they failed to recognize the sincerity of the latter but because they approached the matter with a different premise, namely, that a colonial régime, however satisfactory, was no substitute for self-government.

The three-pronged problem of applicability of Charter principles, international accountability of administering States and the goals to be achieved in the process of decolonization dominated the debate until 1960. Increased political pressure by non-administering States, coupled with the changing composition of the UN, led to the adoption of the 1960 Declaration and a set of guidelines for determining what constituted a non-self-governing territory.

- **A 1960 Assembly resolution, adopted separately from the Declaration on decolonization, details 12 principles to serve as a guide to Member States in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transmit information under Article 73 e of the Charter. These include the *prima facie* principle that there is such an obligation if the territory is geographically separate and ethnically and/or culturally distinct from the country administering it, and if it has not achieved a full measure of self-government.**

By 1960, some 30 Trust territories and other non-self-governing Territories had attained self-government or independence. In that year, 17 new Member States were admitted to the UN, all of which were former colonial territories. Yet more than 80 million people still remained under colonial rule.

Establishment of a decolonization focal point

A year after adopting the Declaration on decolonization, the General Assembly established a new organ to see that its principles were being applied: the *Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, commonly referred to as the Special Committee on decolonization. The Assembly gave the Special Committee the tasks of:

- **examining countries' compliance with the Declaration and with other resolutions on decolonization;**

- **sending visiting missions to dependent territories to obtain first-hand information;**

- **making arrangements—in co-operation with the administering Powers—for a UN presence in territories to help prepare, and observe, the final stages of the decolonization process;**
- **making recommendations to the administering authorities and the General Assembly on territories not yet independent;**
- **notifying the Security Council of any development in those territories which might threaten international peace and security.**

When the Special Committee began its work in 1962, a total of 64 non-self-governing territories were on its list. The list has dwindled to 18 territories, located mainly in the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean.

Each year, the Special Committee examines the latest political, constitutional, economic, social and educational developments in each territory, on the basis of information submitted by the administering Powers and in published sources.

- **The Special Committee has invited Governments and national liberation movements to participate in its work. It also considers communications from individuals or groups concerned with the conditions in the territories on its list. Its conclusions and recommendations are forwarded to the General Assembly for action. It also recommends action by the Security Council, specialized agencies of the UN system and Governments.**

In search of first-hand information

To obtain first-hand information on the situation in colonial territories and determine the wishes of the inhabitants regarding their future, the Special Committee, with the co-operation of the administering Powers, has dispatched visiting missions to a number of territories.

- **In 1972, a special mission of the Committee visited liberated areas of what is now the independent State of Guinea-Bissau, formerly known as Portuguese Guinea. This mission was unprecedented. It was the first such mission dispatched without the agreement of the administering country. The Government of Portugal and the nationalist movement working for independence in Guinea-Bissau were engaged in all-out war. Over the course of a seven-day journey, the group travelled 160 miles on foot, day and night. The Special Committee later concluded that the mission had affirmed beyond any doubt that control of the liberated areas of Guinea-Bissau was in the hands of the national liberation movement of the territory. The General Assembly later that year recognized Guinea-Bissau's liberation movement as the authentic representative of the territory's people, and called for it to be represented when Governments or UN bodies met to deal with matters pertaining to the territory.**

Preparing a people for nationhood

People are a nation's most important resource. Since the early 1950s, the UN system has provided technical assistance to non-self-governing territories in co-operation with their administering Powers, and has established scholarship programmes for students of non-

self-governing territories to study at universities as well as at technical or vocational institutions.

▶ **The United Nations Institute for Namibia was established by the General Assembly in 1976 to train Namibian administrative personnel and carry out research which would assist the Government of an independent Namibia in formulating public policy. By independence in 1990, the Institute had trained more than 1,200 Namibians in different subject areas, and produced studies, draft legislation and reports on the country's socio-economic situation and on its legal, constitutional and political problems. Many of the Institute's graduates now occupy important positions in the Government of Namibia. Originally located in Lusaka, Zambia, the Institute will move to Namibia by the end of 1990.**

Peace, security and decolonization

Events in the last century have demonstrated that when people are frustrated in their drive for self-government, and when repressive measures are taken by colonial régimes, the violence which follows directly threatens international peace and security. The liberation struggles in southern Africa have served as a constant reminder of this simple truth.

▶ **The unilateral declaration of independence by a white minority régime in Southern Rhodesia in 1965 led to a protracted civil war. The régime's threat to peace and security in the region prompted the Security Council to impose sanctions under the Charter's enforcement provisions for the first time, in 1966. After nearly 15 years of international pressure, the situation was finally resolved through negotiations conducted by the territory's administering authority, the United Kingdom. Following elections in the territory, observed by a visiting UN mission, Southern Rhodesia became independent as Zimbabwe in 1980.**

The entire range of multilateral actions available through UN machinery—and the Secretary-General's good offices—have been brought to bear in such situations over the last four decades. Namibia's peaceful transition to independence was the capstone of such efforts in southern Africa.

Unfinished business

Several difficult, unresolved questions concerning non-self-governing territories remain which have important implications for international peace and security. In these cases, the Secretary-General's good offices—both to prevent conflict and promote respect for the right of self-determination—have become especially important. Efforts continue towards resolving the problem of Western Sahara through an act of self-determination by the territory's people. Questions about the status of East Timor and that of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) remain to be resolved in accordance with Charter principles.

The General Assembly currently lists 18 non-self-governing territories, with a total population of about 2 million, to which the Declaration on decolonization applies. Most are small island territories in the Pacific or the Caribbean. For the Special Committee, it is important that the people of these territories not be forgotten: that they be fully aware of the options available to them under the Charter, and allowed freely to choose their status.

WORLD ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

"The grave economic disparities between the North and the South . . . need to be progressively reduced . . . We have now advanced to a stage where, in a more pragmatic temper and with less theoretical confrontation, a business-like dialogue can be instituted in order to work out a credible strategy."

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Remarks at a meeting of the United Nations
Association of the USSR
Moscow, 16 January 1990

A new sense of urgency about global threats to the well-being of the world's inhabitants has characterized UN debates on economic and political issues in the past two years. The impact of international economic conditions *on* people, and the crucial role of investment *in* people—by improving their nutrition, health care, water supplies, sanitation, education and housing—as a means of promoting development, have been brought sharply into focus in those debates.

The 1980s: A lost decade for the poor

The gap between rich and poor nations is widening, not narrowing. "The industrial market-economies are enjoying an unprecedented period of expansion," the UN Secretary-General has said, "while only a few developing countries were able to achieve high levels of growth. For most developing countries, the 1980s brought no genuine betterment." Large segments of the world's population are worse off now than they were at the beginning of the 1980s, which have been described as "the lost decade for development".

UN data indicate that:

- **The economic crisis of the 1980s has set back the development process, reversed the trends towards poverty reduction that existed in Latin America, accelerated poverty in Africa, and intensified social tension everywhere.**

- **In Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia, a state of economic emergency prevails, with stagnation or decline in most countries. Per capita output in Africa and Latin America declined once again in 1989.**

- **Although the *proportion* of the world's population living in poverty has declined, the *absolute number* of poor has increased steadily and now exceeds 1 billion people—one fifth of the world's population.**

Foreign debt, the collapse of commodity prices, high interest rates and the difficulties experienced in exporting manufactured goods are among the reasons for the crisis.

- **The *collapse of commodity prices* during the 1980s resulted in a major drop in export earnings for many developing countries. This was particularly devastating for the many African countries that depend almost entirely on one or two commodities for export.**

- ***Protectionism* in the industrialized world increased in the 1980s, hampering the export of manufactured goods by developing countries.**

- **Economic growth has often failed to keep pace with the *increase in population*. In many nations, population growth remains above 2 per cent, making the situation even worse in per capita terms.**

The debt penalty

A primary cause of the developing countries' dire economic situation is their burden of external debt. The World Bank estimates that the debt of all developing countries stood at $1,290 billion at the end of 1989. Latin America and the Caribbean alone owed $434 billion. As developing countries devote larger and larger shares of their export earnings to debt service, less is available for investments, or to maintain import levels capable of fuelling growth.

Money flows from poor to rich countries

In the 1970s, says a report of the Secretary-General, various developing countries received from industrialized nations large commercial bank loans, which contributed to their economic growth at the time. Many developing nations were growing at healthy rates, and used the loans to finance development projects such as building roads, expanding industry and boosting food production.

But at the end of the 1970s various factors dampened the developing countries' prospects. The fall in commodity prices reduced export earnings. Direct foreign investment in the developing world dropped by half between 1982 and 1986. Capital flight drained money out of developing countries. Overall foreign aid remained stagnant. As a consequence, developing countries began having troubles in servicing their debts, and commercial banks were no longer eager to make new loans. By 1983, debt payments had resulted in massive financial transfers from the developing to the industrial countries. The net transfer of resources out of developing countries totalled about $180 billion over the period 1984-1989.

Official development assistance (ODA) from industrialized countries and limited amounts of other official flows have become almost the only source of financial transfer to developing countries. ODA has grown more or less in pace with the world economy, but the target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of the industrialized countries—first called for by the General Assembly in 1970 and most recently reaffirmed at the Assembly's April/May 1990 special session on international economic co-operation—has been met by only a handful of those countries.

Data compiled by the UN Secretariat's Department of International Economic and Social Affairs indicate the magnitude of the investment problems facing developing countries.

- **For the 15 most indebted countries, the net outflow in 1989 amounted to $37 billion—almost 4 per cent of their gross domestic product. These countries in 1989 had to spend 41 per cent of their export earnings to service their debt.**

- **The deterioration in financial flows has made international trade the developing countries' most important source of external resources. But in the 1980s the environment for trade—particularly trade in developing countries' traditional exports—was generally unfavourable. Low commodity prices and protectionist measures in industrialized nations made it difficult for developing countries to finance investments through export earnings.**

To reorient their economies, developing countries have to invest. But the constant drain on their financial resources and depressed domestic economies have caused them to lower investments in productive enterprises, infrastructure and public services. This harms short-term growth and dampens prospects for future growth.

Escaping from the debt trap

Debt repayments are the single most important component of the outflow of financial resources from developing countries, and the major obstacle to their development. Solutions acceptable to both debtors and creditors are being sought. In some cases, developing countries' debts have been reduced or rescheduled.

- **In February 1990, Mexico signed a pact with 450 creditor banks to reduce its external debt. Belgium, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States have begun to cancel outright certain official debts of low-income countries.**

According to the Secretary General's 1989 report to the General Assembly on developing-country debt, further measures should be taken to limit the net outflow of resources, through reduction of the debt and debt service, through new lending by private creditors and multilateral agencies (such as the World Bank), and through special agreements between debtor and creditor nations.

Recent proposals have opened new paths for debt reduction. In his 1989 report, the Secretary-General urged the international community to seize the opportunity to set a target date for eliminating the debt overhang. Although this would require efforts from all those involved—

creditors, debtors, Governments, banks and international lending agencies—early action would rejuvenate investment and revive growth in the affected countries.

Human resources development = a capital gain

The crisis of the 1980s took a heavy toll on the development of human resources. In many developing countries social spending was cut, workers were laid off and investment in education fell, leaving 100 million children without hope of ever attending school. The potential of women has been particularly neglected.

- **In highly indebted countries, says a UN report, public expenditures on food, education, health, housing and welfare have been sharply cut, and social services have worsened. The toll in human terms has been distressing.**

- **According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), spending on health per capita in the 37 poorest countries dropped by more than half during the 1980s, leading to increased child mortality.**

The development of human potential has become a priority for UN organizations, UNICEF and UNDP among them.

- **UNICEF has long advocated an approach to development which emphasizes investment in a country's human resources. "Development in the 1990s should be judged by human indicators," says UNICEF's Executive Director. "For growth to be sustainable, nations must protect and develop their human capital."**

- **UNICEF's Child Survival and Development approach emphasizes such goals as improved mother and child health care, universal child immunization, provision of clean drinking water and sanitation, and improved nutrition and education.**

Despite setbacks in the 1980s, UNICEF points to progress in some areas:

- **During the 1980s, UNICEF, with WHO and other UN agencies, has helped pioneer low-cost health measures. Child immunization coverage against the most common childhood diseases increased from less than 10 per cent in 1980 to about 70 per cent today, saving the lives of at least 2 million children under five each year and reducing the incidence of polio.**

- **Oral rehydration therapy, a low-cost technique which prevents and treats dehydration from diarrhoea (the number-one child killer), prevented almost 1 million deaths in 1988.**

- **Some 700 million people in the world have gained access to safe drinking water, in part due to efforts spurred by the UN's International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990).**

To give special prominence to the importance of children in development, UNICEF is sponsoring a *World Summit for Children* at United Nations Headquarters in September 1990.

- **The Summit will be the first-ever meeting of heads of State from both industrialized and developing countries, as well as Western and Eastern European countries. The Summit will allow world leaders to focus on issues affecting the future of children. Its main goal is to mobilize action world-wide**

to achieve a two-thirds reduction in child deaths, and to secure priority for children on national and global agendas.

For its part, UNDP, which has a central co-ordinating and funding role in development assistance provided by the UN system, has defined human resources development in terms of education, training and utilization of human potential for social and economic growth.

- **Over 75 per cent of UNDP's field expenditures aim at human resources development. UNDP's projects that provide experts in technical fields as diverse as agriculture, manufacturing and civil aviation nearly always include a training element.**

- **UNDP also places a high priority on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. This programme promotes the exchange of technologies, ideas, information and solutions among developing countries, through initiatives such as the use of developing-country experts and the grant of fellowships at institutions in developing countries.**

- **Another UNDP programme, Partners in Development, has allocated over $3 million to non-governmental organizations for community-based projects. In 1989, 62 UNDP field offices gave support of up to $25,000 each to 125 projects, which included improving primary health care and training women for employment.**

"Human beings hold the key to long-term development," says UNDP's Administrator. "The ultimate goal of development is to offer people more options—to improve their standards of well-being, their political freedom, human rights and self-respect."

We all are in the same global boat

Developing countries must operate in a world economy that is more and more interdependent. A global dimension has been added to the activities of individuals, firms and Governments, providing them with opportunities but also imposing constraints. Interdependence has accelerated the transmission of both positive growth impulses and negative shocks.

As a result, economic policy has changed or is under scrutiny in virtually all countries. Many developing countries have responded by adjusting their domestic policies, in particular by adopting measures to enhance efficiency. International policy-making is still largely short-term, not yet having adjusted to the new global realities. But many of the world's economic difficulties require closer international co-operation and a longer-term perspective.

Elements of a strategy

The UN has proposed a comprehensive strategy to tackle the crisis. Among its elements:

For industrialized nations . . .

- **To restore investment, *international financial flows* to developing countries should be greatly increased.**

- Industrialized countries should *expand ODA*. Since their per capita income increased in the 1980s, they are in a strong position to provide aid to the developing world.
- Developing countries should have *greater access to markets* in industrialized countries for their exports. The World Bank estimates that if all trade barriers to industrialized countries' markets were eliminated, the economies of the developing world could grow by some 3 per cent more a year.
- The debt problem should be resolved. "Efforts for debt and *debt-service reduction* must be pursued vigorously, underpinned with larger resources and extended to a larger number of countries," according to the Secretary-General.

. . . for developing nations . . .

- Developing countries should *intensify their mutual economic relations* to exploit their complementarity and to increase their integration in the global economy. They should vigorously expand trading arrangements and economic co-operation.
- Countries that depend on one or two commodities for their exports must *diversify* their economies and increase their participation in processing, marketing and distributing their commodities. But to do so they need stability in the international commodity markets.
- *Technological innovation* offers countries the possibility of accelerating their development. Many developing countries are becoming users and also producers of new technologies. Improved transfer of technology should be a major goal of the international community.
- Developing countries need to *release entrepreneurial initiative*. They also need to rely more on market mechanisms for pricing and resource allocation. National policies should relax barriers to the private sector, without neglecting the responsibility of the public sector to restrain private monopolies.
- "Developing countries themselves have to *reform their economies* so that they can better cope with the crisis and fully use opportunities for future growth," the Secretary-General has said. "Monetary and fiscal policies no doubt need to be strengthened. The public sector should be made more efficient and the private sector stimulated to invest and improve productivity."

. . . and for the UN

Industrialized and developing countries together need to reach an understanding on economic issues. The UN provides important forums for airing and debating proposals in key areas, such as:

- the revitalization of the economies of developing countries (discussed at a special session of the General Assembly in April 1990);
- a new programme for action for least developed countries (UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, September 1990);
- an international development strategy for the 1990s (being negotiated at the UN);

- **international trade as an engine for development and economic growth (1991 session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development);**
- **environmentally sound development (UN Conference on Environment and Development, Brazil, June 1992);**
- **population (to be examined at a major international UN meeting in 1994).**

"Peace dividends" and development

'World military expenditures in 1989 are estimated to have been close to a trillion dollars—approximately the same as the total external debt of the developing countries," the Secretary-General has noted.

Decreasing East-West tension and arms reduction agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union will have many implications. Reductions in military spending will free financial resources that could be allocated to development assistance.

Other implications may prove equally important: the opening up of trade, investment and cultural exchange, and the abatement of ideological conflicts about economic systems. These changes will affect all countries, industrialized as well as developing.

East vs. South?

Economic reforms in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will deeply affect the world economy. These countries will make substantial demands on international resources, and many developing countries fear that such resources will be rerouted to Eastern Europe and away from them.

On the other hand, a substantial stimulus to the world economy is likely to flow from the reduction of the trade barriers between Eastern Europe and the rest of the world. Economic restructuring in Eastern Europe "should lead in the not-too-distant future to the growth of their markets, thus facilitating exports from developing countries," the UN Secretary-General has said. Eastern Europe should also be able to increase its assistance to the developing world.

Nevertheless, a report of the Secretary-General to the regular 1989 session of the General Assembly suggests that industrial countries should reassure developing countries that the additional demand for resources in Eastern Europe will not involve any diversion of resources from them.

The role of the UN

Perhaps the UN's most important contribution in dealing with economic and development issues stems from its universality. The UN's mandate is broad. All voices are heard in its debates: those of government representatives of the least developed and poorest countries as well as the economically more advanced and prosperous; heavily indebted and creditor countries; independent experts and eminent persons from the business, research and academic communities; and representatives of non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies who,

through their access to the Economic and Social Council, articulate the special needs and concerns of their constituencies—often the world's poorest and most vulnerable. At the UN, all the components of the world community are given the opportunity to shape international policy.

* * *

A note on UN system assistance for development

The UN provides more than just a unique forum for global economic dialogue. More than 30 programmes and specialized agencies of the UN system provide, at the request of Governments, expert advice, training and equipment to help them assess and make use of their resources.

- **In 1988, over $8 billion was made available to developing countries through the bodies of the UN system. About half this amount was made up of grants from such programmes as the *UN Development Programme (UNDP)*, the *UN Population Fund (UNFPA)*, *UNICEF* and the *World Food Programme (WFP)*, or specialized agencies such as the *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*, the *International Labour Organisation (ILO)* and the *World Health Organization (WHO)*.**
- **The remainder was in the form of concessional loans from the *World Bank* and its affiliates and the *International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*.**
- **Contributions by Governments and other sources channelled through the UN system represent *14 per cent of all* ODA to developing countries. ODA totalled $51 billion in 1988.**
- ***UN assistance concentrates on the poorest countries.* Forty per cent of UN concessional assistance (grants or low-interest loans) is for countries classified as ''least developed''. More than a third of all concessional assistance is for countries where the GNP per capita is $250 or less; seven eighths is for countries where per capita GNP is $500 or less. Geographically, the main beneficiaries are in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.**

Total expenditures on operational activities were $7.8 billion in 1988. They included:

- **$3.3 billion in grants for development from such organizations as UNDP, FAO, UNICEF and UNFPA;**
- **$3.7 billion in concessional loans (from the World Bank Group and IFAD);**
- **$800 million in grants for refugee, humanitarian, special economic assistance and disaster relief programmes—from such sources as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator—and for special programmes of economic assistance to individual countries as mandated by the General Assembly.**

ENVIRONMENT

UNITED NATIONS

''A turning-point has been reached. For the first time it is generally realized that we must enter into a new relationship with our planet—a kind of environmental compact whereby we, who get our life sustenance from our planet, will agree to work together to protect it.''

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Address to the NGO Conference on
Environment and Development: Only One Earth,
13 September 1989

Daily bulletins confirm the failing health of our planet. The destruction of tropical forests continues unabated. Deserts are expanding, soils eroding and animal species disappearing at an unprecedented pace. From Alaska to Morocco, oil tanker accidents cause widespread oil spills in the world's oceans. The ozone layer that protects us from dangerous solar radiation appears to be thinning. Harmful gases continue to be released into the atmosphere, spurring concerns about global warming.

Taking the pulse of our planet

In June 1992, world attention will focus on the urgent need to find ways to develop economically without continuing to destroy the planet. The UN will convene a two-week conference in Brazil on Environment and Development to try to agree on strategies for sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries. The UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 focused principally on the environment. The 1992 forum will concentrate on environmentally sound development, and will feature topics such as the interrelationship between environment, international trade and third world debt.

Preparations for the Conference are under way. An intergovernmental preparatory committee started its work in March 1990. The General Assembly has specifically requested non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to contribute to the Conference, and said that preparations should also involve the scientific community, industry and trade unions. NGO meetings are being held the world over in anticipation of the Conference, which will be accompanied by a parallel NGO forum.

Towards sustainable development

The global meeting in Brazil will come five years after publication of *Our Common Future*, the landmark 1987 report on the environment by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Commissioned in 1983 by the General Assembly, the report makes an urgent plea for "sustainable development", that is, development "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".The concept of sustainable development involves:

- **managing and improving technology and social organization to promote economic growth within the limits of the Earth's ability to sustain it;**
- **meeting the essential needs of the world's poor and extending to them the opportunity to improve their lives; and**
- **bringing the life-style of the more affluent within the planet's ecological means.**

"Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs," says the World Commission's report.

A question of priorities

The World Commission stressed that the human race urgently needs to make fundamental changes in the way it treats the environment and in how it perceives "security". It indicated that global military expenditures total about $1 trillion a year—about $2.5 billion a day—and continue to grow. This exceeds the world's total combined spending on new technologies for energy, health, agricultural productivity and pollution control.

- **An action plan for tropical forests would cost $1.3 billion a year over five years. This annual sum is the equivalent of half a day of the world's military expenditures.**
- **One of the worst environmental hazards in the third world is lack of clean water for household use, contributing to 80 per cent of disease. Meeting the goals of the UN Water and Sanitation Decade would have cost $30 billion a year during the 1980s: the approximate equivalent of 20 days' military spending.**
- **To supply contraceptives to all women who wish to practice family planning would cost an additional $1 billion a year on top of the $2 billion spent today. This additional $1 billion is roughly equivalent to 10 hours of military spending.**

Governments continue to see "security" in military terms. For the Commission, "the whole notion of security as traditionally understood—in terms of political and military threats to national sovereignty—must be expanded to include the growing impacts of environmental stress—locally, nationally, regionally and globally. There are no military solutions to environmental insecurity."

The UN and the environment

The United Nations system, and in particular the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), has been a catalyst and a rallying point for efforts to achieve sustainable development. The 1972 Stockholm Conference led to a decade of stock-taking: UN conferences on population (1974), food (1975), human settlements (1976), water (1977), desertification (1977) and primary health care (1978) contributed to the store of knowledge and to the growing public concern about the state of our environment.

- **UNEP was created as a result of the Stockholm Conference. Its mandate is to encourage and co-ordinate sound environmental practices everywhere. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, it is staffed by 170 professionals world-wide. Supported by voluntary contributions from Governments, UNEP administers an Environment Fund of about $35 million per year—a woefully small amount, given the difficulty of the global problems it must address.**

A few examples of UNEP's work

- ***Binding agreements*: UNEP's action has led to major international treaties, such as the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (see below), and the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.**

- ***Planning*: In Papua New Guinea, UNEP helped draft a body of environmental laws and created a planning system to protect rain forests and prevent unrestrained development. (The World Commission notes that by the end of the century there will be little virgin tropical forest left outside the Zaire River basin, the western half of Brazil's Amazonia, the Guyana tract of South America, and parts of New Guinea.)**

- ***Acid rain*: UNEP, the UN Economic Commission for Europe and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have helped reduce the cross-border pollution that contributes to acid rain in Europe. An international treaty and executive body promote co-operation among European countries to limit the release of pollutants that destroy forests and acidify lakes.**

- ***Desertification*: As part of its programme to prevent the turning of fertile land into desert, UNEP has helped Tunisia to develop the most comprehensive plan to date to combat desertification and reverse land sterilization by the turn of the century.**

- ***Energy*: UNEP, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are co-operating in a major project on risk assessment and management of complex industrial installations to help planners decide the energy option most viable for their particular case.**

- ***Monitoring*: A variety of UNEP programmes help monitor the state of the world's environment and improve the exchange of information among scientists and decision-makers. These include the Global Environmental Monitoring System, the Global Resource Information Data Base, INFOTERRA (a global information system linking national and international institutions) and the *International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals*.**

▶ ***Threatened species:*** **Experts estimate that every day 100 species of flora or fauna are lost for ever. A quarter of the Earth's estimated 5 million to 30 million plants, animals, micro-organisms and ecosystems are believed to be at risk of extinction within 30 years. Their loss threatens not only the world's climate and the maintenance of oxygen in the atmosphere, but also crop breeding and such vital industries as those producing pharmaceuticals from plants. Under UNEP auspices, legal and technical groups are at work on an international convention to save the Earth's disappearing plant and animal species.**

In carrying out its work, UNEP often combines its resources with those of other parts of the UN system, such as the UN Development Programme and the UN specialized agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, WMO, WHO and IAEA. UNEP also works with NGOs, with the scientific and academic communities, and with industry.

The UN General Assembly plays a major role. For instance, in December 1989 it called for a suspension by 30 June 1992 of all large-scale driftnet fishing on the high seas. The use of these giant plastic nets can be a highly indiscriminate and wasteful fishing method, threatening the conservation of fish, birds and marine mammals. Driftnets—up to 30 miles long and dropping to 50 feet—are used by some 1,800 ships from Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. They catch and kill virtually every marine creature in their path, including hundreds of thousands of whales, seals and dolphins. These nets, for the first time in history, threaten the carrying capacity and sustainability of deep-water oceans. The agreement reached by the General Assembly—like all Assembly resolutions—is not legally binding. But diplomats are confident that the suspension will be respected because there is such broad support for it.

Public awareness and participation

Public awareness is essential for dealing with environment programmes. A 1989 poll conducted for UNEP in 14 countries on four continents showed that people living in industrial and developing countries alike are deeply concerned about the quality of the environment. The poll indicated that people are sceptical of their leaders' ability to preserve the environment, and that they would accept short-term sacrifices (including higher taxes) to protect it.

▶ **The number of groups working for the environment has mushroomed. The Environmental Liaison Centre run by UNEP has over 230 member NGOs and maintains contact with 7,000 others.**

NGOs have often initiated activities to improve the environment, and pressured Governments and industry to change policies and practices which damage it.

Global threats: the ozone layer

In 1977, UNEP brought together an international group of scientists to concentrate on a dwindling resource: the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, which protects us from harmful solar radiation. The result was a programme of research on the ozone layer and on the consequences of damage to it. By 1986, the group had made eight separate assessments of the severity of the threat to the layer. As knowledge grew, Governments were increasingly compelled "to do something". In 1985, under UNEP's sponsorship, Governments concluded an agreement

which committed them to take measures to preserve the ozone layer—the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

- **Ozone layer depletion is due to the emission of chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the air. Such depletion increases the exposure of the Earth to the sun's ultraviolet rays. As a result, skin cancer and eye diseases could increase, while our ability to resist infections might be reduced. The economic consequences could range from crop damage to a reduction in the sea fish population.**

- **CFCs are widely used in aerosols, refrigeration, packaging and the electronics industry. They can remain active in the atmosphere for as long as a century, and the effects of chemicals already released may not yet be evident.**

- **A ''hole'' in the ozone layer about the size of the United States appears above Antarctica each spring. Since 1979, levels of ozone there have fallen by 40 per cent during the spring. Winter ozone concentrations in the northern hemisphere have decreased up to 4 per cent since 1970.**

The Montreal Protocol

On 1 January 1989, the UNEP-sponsored Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer came into force. The Protocol curbs the production and use of chemicals that damage the ozone layer. More than 40 countries, accounting for 80 per cent of the world's use of CFCs, have ratified the Protocol. These countries committed themselves to cut production and use of CFCs in half by 1998. Developing countries, which are responsible for a relatively small proportion of CFC release, have been given a 10-year grace period to comply with the Protocol.

- **At a meeting held in Helsinki, Finland, in May 1989, 81 countries and the European Community agreed to abandon completely the production and consumption of CFCs by the year 2000—or earlier if possible.**

The Protocol and industry

The Montreal Protocol has spurred the efforts of companies and Governments to find environmentally safe alternatives to CFCs.

- **Transnational corporations including Bayer, General Electric, Akzon and Allied Signal presented proposals for redesigning refrigeration, air conditioning and dry-cleaning technologies to reduce or eliminate the need for CFCs.**

- **DuPont, the world's largest CFC producer, and ICI Britain have announced full production by the early 1990s of CFC substitutes which do not damage the ozone layer.**

- **Other companies, like Canada's Northern Telecom, are changing industrial processes to reduce their CFC consumption.**

- **The Chemical Manufacturers' Association, a trade group whose members include major CFC producers in nine developed and developing countries, shares information on production levels with UNEP to assist in keeping an eye on how the Montreal agreement is working out.**

The threat to the ozone layer potentially affects the well-being of every individual in every country. It is neither an industrial-country problem nor a developing-country problem: it is a global problem.

Our planet as a greenhouse?

The foremost global problem is the possible warming of the planet from the emission of certain gases into the atmosphere—the so-called greenhouse effect. A majority of atmospheric scientists now believe that as certain man-made gases build up in the atmosphere, they trap infrared radiation from the sun in the atmosphere like a greenhouse retains heat. This could cause climate changes greater than any in the past 10,000 years.

- **The major culprit is carbon dioxide, a "greenhouse gas" whose emission derives mostly from the burning of large quantities of fossil fuels (petrol, oil, coal, natural gas), mainly in the industrial countries. The burning of tropical forests also produces carbon dioxide. CFCs and methane are believed to contribute to the warming of the Earth.**

- **A warmer climate would greatly damage agriculture. It could bring about changes in rainfall patterns. It could significantly reduce areas which can sustain specific crops, like wheat. Lands where agriculture is already difficult would suffer most.**

- **Global warming would also bring about a rise in sea-levels, as polar ice-caps melt. A temperature increase between 1.5 and 4.5 degrees Celsius would increase sea-levels by about 80 centimetres. This could harm many countries, as one third of the world's population lives within 60 kilometres (45 miles) of a coastline. Water could, for instance, cover more than 12 per cent of Bangladesh's land area. The best estimates from current models is that such a temperature rise ill be experienced within 50 years.**

A treaty to protect climate

To counter global warming, efforts are under way to complete a treaty on climate change. UNEP and WMO set up in 1988 the Environmental Panel on Climate Change, in which more than 1,000 experts from 60 countries are participating. The Panel is preparing a report on the likely impacts of global warming and the various responses to it, to be presented the Second World ClimateConference (Geneva, October-November 1990). On the basis of the report, Governments will immediately start negotiations towards an international agreement protecting the climate. The treaty will promote energy efficiency and set targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for reforestation. The agreement should be ready before the 1992 UN Conference in Brazil, if not sooner. Meanwhile, UNEP's Governing Council has urged Governments to start combating climate change now.

The protection of our planet—the only one we have—requires a common effort. Everyone has an essential role to play—Governments, corporations, scientists, international organizations, as well as private citizens. Only this common effort can ensure our common future.

DRUG CONTROL

UNITED NATIONS

"And what can we say about the hundreds of thousands of dollars produced by this traffic, which, like a new fifth column, infiltrate the financial systems of the industrialized countries and distort the economies of developing countries? It has been estimated that the world traffic in illicit drugs amounts to roughly $500 billion a year. Only the arms trade exceeds it. It is a sad commentary on the state of mankind at the end of the twentieth century that the bulk of our vast productive energies is devoted to manufacturing our own destruction."

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
address to the World Ministerial Summit on Drugs,
London, April 1990

The 20th century has witnessed a transformation of war from the use of conventional weapons on the battlefield to total war, where weapons of mass destruction can annihilate entire communities without distinguishing between combatants and civilians. Another spectre has emerged over the past few decades which cuts across social and economic barriers and afflicts the weakest and most vulnerable groups in society—the scourge of drugs.

- **In *Colombia*, a virtual war has been launched to wipe out drug barons who have unleashed a campaign of unprecedented violence. Over the past five years, more than 2,000 law enforcement agents have been killed.**
- **In 1989, more than 270,000 poppy and hemp plants were destroyed in *Turkmenistan*, the Central Asian Republic with the highest drug abuse and production in the Soviet Union.**
- **According to a recent survey conducted in *Jamaica*, an estimated 39% of young people between the ages of 13 and 21 had already tried marijuana, while 2.5% in the same age-group had tried cocaine.**
- **Since small denominations from street sales must be turned into portable money, drug kingpins weigh cash, knowing that $1 million in $20 bills weighs 110 pounds.**

The year 1990 is more than a mere punctuation mark in the tale of terror that narco-trafficking has become. Reflecting the need for a breakthrough, drug control has risen to the top of the international agenda in the 1980s. There are growing expectations that the UN can act as a catalyst in formulating an international strategy even if such intervention is modest. A *special session of the UN General Assembly*, the joint *United Kingdom/UN World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat* and the *Eighth UN Crime Congress* are part of the brainstorming process to give direction to the international community.

New threats, new alliances

In February 1990, responding to a suggestion by Colombia's President Virgilio Barco Vargas, the UN General Assembly met in special session to look at ways of combating the widespread epidemic of violence, social upheaval and human misery brought on by drug abuse and illicit trafficking. With an estimated 40 million drug consumers world-wide, countries have come to realize that time is running out. If they are not already trapped in the web of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, they may soon be. The special session's closing *Political Declaration* and *Global Programme of Action* captured the spirit of co-operation at the meeting, and were complemented by a decision to declare the period 1991-2000 as the UN Decade against Drug Abuse. Highlights of the consensus reached at the special session:

- **The *UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs* is to work on a legal instrument aimed at controlling and eliminating illegal drug demand and provide for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.**
- **The *World Health Organization* is to help develop training materials on rational prescription and use of licit drugs for health personnel, and to develop education programmes on the relationship between AIDS and drug abuse.**
- **The *UN Environment Programme* will investigate the environmental effects of cultivation of, and use and disposal of chemical substances in processing, narcotic drugs.**
- **Co-operation in law enforcement is to be expanded by reinforcing links between the UN, the *Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)* and the *International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)*.**
- **The *UN Division of Narcotic Drugs* and *INTERPOL* are to develop a repository of laws and regulations on illegal financial flows and the use of the banking system.**
- ***Model treaties on mutual assistance* between countries should be elaborated to cover customs and law enforcement areas.**
- ***Existing UN machinery needs to be re-evaluated* if the UN is to intensify its role in the battle against the drug barons. The Secretary-General has appointed an expert group to advise on ways to enhance UN structures for drug abuse control.**

An international consensus has emerged on the strategy to fight the surge in drug abuse and illicit trafficking: attack demand and supply of illicit drugs simultaneously; increase international co-operation to make life tougher for drug traffickers; strengthen enforcement measures; and

provide alternatives for those trapped in the drug trade's vicious cycle. UN efforts to support these responses are concentrated in three bodies:

- **UN efforts in drug control go back to 1946, when the *UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs* was established to continue work begun by the League of Nations in setting international drug control policy and promoting co-operation between Governments. Today it prepares international treaties and sets priorities for action. The Commission is supported by a branch of the Secretariat: the *Division of Narcotic Drugs*. Advising on how to bring national legislation and administration in line with international agreements, organizing meetings for heads of law enforcement agencies and training officials concerned with drug control—including laboratory personnel and customs officials—are among the Division's activities.**

- **The *International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)*, an international group of experts, monitors the legal trade in drugs and tries to ensure that there is no "leakage" to illicit trafficking, in accordance with the international drug control treaty system.**

- **The *UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC)*, with about $70 million in annual voluntary contributions from Governments, plans and carries out projects to strengthen drug control, helps develop alternative sources of livelihood for those who cultivate drug-related crops, and helps countries with the training and rehabilitation of drug abusers.**

No region is spared

The consensus against the scourge of drugs is as strong outside the conference hall as it is inside: controlling drugs is perceived as an urgent priority by people around the world.

- **In recent public opinion polls conducted for the UN Department of Public Information in *Mexico* and the *European Community* countries, 68% of Mexicans mentioned drug abuse as being of great concern, and 60% of Western Europeans. In all the countries polled, drugs figured in the top five issues of interest.**

- **About two thirds of the citizens of the *United States* think the drug menace is public enemy number one. According to a poll conducted by a major newspaper and a broadcasting network, people in the United States fear drugs more than war by a ratio of 54 to 1.**

The world's citizens have good reason to be concerned. The report of INCB for 1989 chronicles the deteriorating situation:

- **In *Latin America*, an ominous development is the spread of opium poppy cultivation to Guatemala and Colombia.**

- **In *North America*, Canada continues to be a "back door" for illicit drug shipments destined for the United States.**

- **In the *United States*, intravenous drug abuse now accounts for 31% of all adult AIDS cases and is the largest cause of new AIDS victims.**

- **Available data indicate a sixfold increase in the volume of cocaine seized in *Western Europe* over the last four years. About 4,000 kilos were intercepted in the first quarter of 1990 alone, and a record total of 6,300 kilos in 1989. In Italy, deaths from overdoses more than doubled between 1986 and 1988.**

- **In the *Soviet Union*, the Ministry of the Interior reports that some 130,000 persons have been registered as ''drug abusers'', of which roughly 60,000 are considered to have become ''drug addicts''.**

- **In *Thailand*, as many as 40% of the country's heroin addicts are believed to carry the AIDS virus, contributing to the spread of the disease.**

- **The *West African* countries of Benin, Nigeria and Togo were previously transit points, but cocaine abuse may be on the rise as traffickers use existing heroin routes to diversify supplies.**

A shadow economy?

- **''If we look for instance at what we have in the regular budget in Vienna for our two main units, the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board, it's about equivalent to a suitcase of heroin at a European or United States airport . . .''**

Co-ordinator of all UN drug control related activities

The 1980s saw many developing countries trapped by debt and low or negative economic growth. Against a background of faltering economies, the sums of money involved in drug transfers have for the first time made narco-trafficking an industry in its own right, second only to arms sales and production. Profits from drug trafficking are so important in some parts of the world that the wheels of the economy are kept turning in great part by these shady activities. The *western hemisphere* seems to be the area of greatest concentration for funnelling proceeds from the illegal drug economy. The size of the U.S. market has been estimated at between at $50 billion and $100 billion a year. Revenues from the sale of South American cocaine account for the lion's share, but Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean are transit points and primary producers of opium and cannabis, adding to the flow of narco-dollars in the region. The term ''money laundering'' has become a part of everyday vocabulary. Profits are siphoned off to overseas banks or invested abroad. Banks, knowingly or otherwise, help drug traffickers launder as much as $100 billion a year made from sales in the United States. In Italy, organized crime is said to launder close to $20 billion annually.

- **The cocaine industry is a major employer in *Bolivia, Colombia* and *Peru*, directly providing a livelihood to between 600,000 and 1.5 million people. The collapse of the Bolivian tin market meant an exodus to the coca fields, where workers could earn wages six to eight times higher than those paid in the legal rural economy. Many gain financially due to the spin-off effect on local economies. Between $2 billion and $4 billion—out of a total $50 billion annual turnover in the cocaine business—stays within Colombia, fueling the local economy. Many Colombians are faced with an unhappy dilemma: they fear recession if the country abruptly shuts down the cocaine traffic. Some favour gradually winding it down over four or five years.**

- **Heroin is a close competitor to cocaine in its ability to addict consumers and generate multi-billion-dollar sales. A kilo of purified heroin has a wholesale value of about $2.2 million. Shadowy warlords inside the "Golden Triangle", the mountainous area where the borders of *Myanmar (Burma)*, *Thailand* and *Laos* come together, were estimated to be producing 60 tons of heroin per year in the mid-1980s. One third of this output, representing billions of dollars, was directed to European and North American markets.**

No quick fixes

The UN's drug control Co-ordinator has stressed that, although giant steps forward have been taken since the 1984 General Assembly Declaration on the Control of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse, a long road lies ahead: "Unlike a drug addict, we cannot hope for 'quick fixes' even of a transitory nature." Various new techniques and alliances have emerged in the war against illicit drug trafficking and abuse, involving groups and institutions inside and outside the UN. The sustained efforts required will test the commitment of Governments, international agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to translate tough talk into action.

- **Increased co-operation between INTERPOL, the CCC and Governments has bolstered attempts to seize contraband. Shipping companies may be held responsible when contraband is discovered in their cargoes, even if they are unwittingly involved in smuggling schemes.**

- **The 1988 *UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* calls for revocation of confidentiality of bank records in investigations of money laundering. A breakthrough occurred in September 1989 when the "Group of Seven"—industrial nations of Western Europe and North America, as well as Japan—agreed to join forces in tracking illegal drug profits. Joint border patrols are also being stepped up. New regional co-operation on this front was initiated in 1989 among the five Central American countries, the Balkan States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation and four African countries.**

- **Confiscation of assets gained through illicit drug sales should be used to improve law enforcement, according to the 1988 UN Convention. In an act of poetic justice, the intercepted profits of crime are being used to strengthen the capabilities of law enforcement groups in the United States. Adequate pay and training are prerequisites for a motivated and honest team of law enforcement officials.**

- **Several countries are concluding accords to combat drug smuggling. The United States and Laos have agreed on ground rules, while the new Government in Panama will work closely with the United States to prevent money laundering. The European Community countries, in anticipation of the removal of customs barriers and deregulation in 1992, are actively trying to lift bank secrecy laws.**

- **Reverting to traditional medical practices, Malaysia is trying to combat heroin addiction by combining religious counselling, charms and mesmerism, exercise, diet, and herbal treatment.**

- **Mosques in Cairo, Egypt, are lending the influence of religious leaders to promote treatment and education for addicts.**

Following in the footsteps . . .

Shanghai, China, was the stage for the earliest international attempt by 13 Governments to control drug trafficking in 1909. The League of Nations and the UN have built on those early efforts.

- **The *1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* identifies substances to be controlled and requires parties to the treaty to designate as punishable offences all intentional violations of its control provisions. The *1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances* addresses the problem of abuse of substances not covered under the 1961 Convention. In the case of highly dangerous hallucinogens such as LSD, the system of control under the 1971 Convention is even more severe than that for narcotic drugs. According to INCB, diversion of drugs covered by the Conventions is now almost always prevented, although attempts continue.**

The 1988 Convention: A turning point

While earlier instruments focus on control of specific substances, the 1988 *UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances* targets the proceeds and techniques of drug trafficking. It seeks to hit drug traffickers where it hurts most—in their pockets and in their freedom of movement. The Convention breaks new ground in that it:

- **permits courts to unveil bank secrecy during drug-related investigations;**
- **facilitates the extradition and prosecution of accused drug traffickers and promotes mutual legal assistance between Governments in drug cases;**
- **improves co-operation with transit States and prevents illicit delivery through the mails;**
- **facilitates the use of "controlled delivery"—the tracking until delivery, and then the interception, of illicit drug shipments;**
- **defines the responsibilities of commercial airlines and shipping firms;**
- **binds Governments to eradicate illegal cultivation of narcotic plants;**
- **proposes, for the first time, a system to monitor international trade in precursors—substances used in illicit processing.**

As of early July 1990, the Convention had been signed by 89 States and by the European Community, and ratified by 17 States. It requires 20 ratifications to enter into force. Countries are already taking steps to give effect to the treaty's provisions:

- ***Canada* has devised legislation for seizing and freezing assets gained from illegal trafficking, and implemented laws governing the sale and promotion of the paraphernalia of the drug trade.**
- ***Iran* enacted in early 1989 a new anti-drug law incorporating many elements of the 1988 Convention. One aspect of the new law empowers Iran's courts to carry out confiscation orders issued by courts in other countries.**

- **In *Côte d'Ivoire*, new laws provide for harsher penalties for drug-related offences, faster extradition, and a crack-down on money laundering.**
- **In 1989, a new trade-licensing system for drugs came into effect in *China*. Export licences are to be granted only if the buyer provides guarantees that no illegal drug production will be undertaken.**
- ***Mexico* created a new Office of Assistant Attorney General for Investigating and Combating Drug Trafficking in December 1988. The country's 1989 budget for anti-drug activities was nearly triple that for 1988.**

Lending a helping hand

Timely exchange of information is crucial to fighting the drug traffic. Countries cannot possibly "go it alone". By serving as a focal point for Governments and NGOs, the UN is a gold-mine of information on the spread of the drug abuse epidemic, on innovative responses, on the kind of help that can be made available and on where to go to get it. Within its limited financial resources, the UN system also provides material assistance to developing countries in their efforts to curb production, trafficking and abuse of drugs.

- **In 1989 the *UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control* had 114 projects under way in 49 countries. Among the Fund's ongoing investments are $15 million to *Thailand* and $20 million to *India*—part of an overall plan to help those countries stem the tide of drug addiction and production. Thailand is a major grower of opium, while India is the only legalized producer of the plant for medical purposes. The Fund has also provided $1 million for a telecommunications network to enhance co-operation among the Caribbean countries themselves and between that region and INTERPOL, assisting law enforcement agencies to communicate rapidly and intercept drug traffickers.**
- **The *UN Development Programme (UNDP)* carries out projects financed by UNFDAC. In *Bolivia*, UNDP seeks to diminish economic dependence of farmers on coca production, improve marketing of alternative crops and upgrade law enforcement. In *Thailand*, UNDP is co-operating with UNFDAC and the UN Children's Fund to promote integrated rural development. The goal is to encourage production of coffee, vegetables and other food and cash crops as alternatives to drug crops. A farmer in one Thai village exemplifies what the programme is trying to accomplish. After a switch to coffee cultivation, the farmer's income improved considerably. He used to make $800 a year cultivating opium poppy, but after his first coffee harvest, without having to pay commissions to drug middlemen, he expected to make $6,000. UNDP reports that, given access to markets, Thai farmers could expect to earn more from a crop that sells at $5 a pound in New York than from opium retailing at $1 million a pound.**

Other organizations in the UN system are also enlisted in the fight:

- **The *World Health Organization*, in collaboration with UNFDAC, is carrying out a study on AIDS among prisoners in order to formulate guidelines for a discussion at the Eighth Crime Congress scheduled to be held in Havana, Cuba, in September 1990. The *International Labour Organisation* has been pursuing a two-pronged policy: promoting rehabilitation and social integration for recovering addicts and developing initiatives to reduce drug abuse in the work-place. The *International Maritime***

***Organization* has developed guidelines to prevent drug smuggling on ships plying international routes. The *International Civil Aviation Organization* is studying measures, including sanctions, to ensure that commercial air carriers are not used to transport illicit narcotics.**

Speaking a common language

A growing number of shared images and expressions reinforce the notion of the global village. On the positive side, the global jargon of fields like aviation, medicine or information technology makes international cooperation in those areas possible. But the street language of drug traffickers and abusers has also entered the world vocabulary.

It is hard to remember a time when terms like "drug warlords", "cocaine barons", "crack", "black tar", "money laundering" and "nickle bag" were not part of daily newscasts. The language and experiences of a child in Bombay's shanty-towns, addicted to "brown sugar"—a heroin derivative used to lace sweets—is depressingly similar to that of the child in New York City, hooked on "crack". Their societies share the anxiety of families, communities and national leaders desperate for ways to break the vicious circle of drug abuse and trafficking, demonstrating that the differences that separate us are less pronounced than the terrifying similiarities of the menace we face.

AFRICAN RECOVERY

UNITED NATIONS

"We are united in our conviction that the crisis currently engulfing Africa is not only an economic crisis, but also a human, legal, political and social crisis. It is a crisis of unprecedented and unacceptable proportions manifested not only in abysmal declines in economic indicators and trends, but more tragically and glaringly in the suffering, hardship and impoverishment of the vast majority of African people."

African Charter for Popular Participation in Development,
adopted in February 1990 at Arusha, Tanzania

The drought which brought widespread famine to Africa in the mid-1980s illustrated the vulnerability of the continent's economic structures and people. On 21 December 1983, UN Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar warned of the crisis, making an urgent appeal for emergency assistance to 150 million people, nearly half of Africa's population.

In the months that followed, the Secretary-General and UN agencies continued to urge the international community to respond to Africa's dire economic situation. Nearly a year later, BBC television coverage of famine in Ethiopia brought images of starvation to the dinner tables and living rooms of the industrialized countries. The resulting public outcry was immediate. Over the next two years, in the largest peace-time international emergency relief operation ever, the world contributed over $4.6 billion in assistance to Africa, helping to rescue at least 3 million famine-stricken people from death. Relief efforts were co-ordinated by the UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, which was disbanded in 1986 when the worst of the famine had passed.

The drought and famine of 1983-1985 forced a rethinking of Africa's development. The continent's vulnerability to changes in weather indicated deep, long-term structural problems. As relief systems were put in place, Governments of African and donor countries, UN system officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) turned their attention from emergency

relief to examine closely—and critically—the policies which have guided Africa's development efforts since independence.

A "lost decade"

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has characterized the 1980s as Africa's "lost decade of development". The UN Recovery Programme for Africa, launched in 1986, is reaching the end of its five-year timetable without having reversed the continent's economic slide. Africa is nowhere near recovery: some 280 million Africans face rising malnutrition and falling living standards. A 1989 World Bank study concluded that "Overall, Africans are almost as poor today as they were 30 years ago."

Against this grim background, Governments, NGOs and UN agencies continue their search for answers to Africa's unique economic problems.

A call for more popular participation

One theme has become a rallying point for all sides in the debate about Africa's development: the importance of the African people themselves in setting the continent back on the road to recovery.

- **At a meeting in 1989, *Africa's finance ministers* recognized that it was difficult to deny that economic and development policies of the 1980s, advanced by Governments and international agencies alike, had been wholly inadequate. As an alternative to orthodox structural adjustment programmes the ministers developed an approach (the *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation* (the *Alternative*)) which emphasized that alleviation of abysmal levels of health, nutrition, education and productivity could not be put on hold while resources were consumed to correct macro-economic imbalances. Acknowledging candidly that basic rights and individual freedoms are often lacking in Africa, and that "this pervasive lack of democracy also makes the mobilization (required for reforms) difficult", the Alternative challenges the continent's Governments to promote "greater mass participation in decision-making." It suggests strengthening indigenous NGOs and grassroots initiatives, which can tap Africa's human resources better than centralized bureaucracies.**

- **Advocating private-sector growth, the *World Bank* echoed many of these same concepts in a November 1989 report, which sets out a range of proposals "aimed at empowering ordinary people, especially women, to take greater responsibility for improving their lives," according to the Bank's President. From this "bottom up" approach to development flows the conclusion that change must come from within the region and not be imposed by the international community, though the latter has a vital supportive role to play. "Africa's future can only be decided by Africans," the study concludes.**

In the same vein, an *International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa* was held at Arusha, Tanzania, in February 1990. Organized by ECA at the initiative of various NGOs, the Conference brought together more than 500 representatives of people's organizations and officials from African Governments and UN agencies.

The Arusha Conference provided an unprecedented opportunity for dialogue among the principal parties concerned with conditions of life in Africa.

The Conference concluded by calling upon African Governments to "yield space to the people" and, at the same time, upon people's organizations to press for democratic participation. The "Charter" adopted by the Conference points to recent events in Eastern Europe as an example of "the power of people to effect momentous change".

This marked change in perceptions by Governments and international agencies takes place after a decade of catastrophe and frustration.

The UN Programme of Action: A blueprint for recovery

In 1986, the UN General Assembly convened a *special session on the critical economic situation in Africa*, the first such session devoted exclusively to the economic situation of a single region. The special session unanimously adopted the *UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990*, in which African countries and the international community, especially donor countries, agreed to assume certain responsibilities.

Africa's Governments committed themselves to pursuing major policy reforms in virtually all sectors:

- **to encourage food production for local consumption by raising price incentives for farmers, making credit available to them, and improving transport to markets;**
- **to reduce budgetary deficits by cutting back on government spending;**
- **to adopt policies favouring consumption of domestically produced goods, so that precious foreign exchange could be used to import the machinery and spare parts needed for recovery.**

The international community agreed to support African development efforts and policy reforms by:

- **providing sufficient external resources by increasing official development assistance (ODA) to Africa—especially grants—arranging for speedier pay-out of development funds, and making technical assistance more responsive to African needs and priorities;**
- **improving the international economic environment for African trade by eliminating protectionist measures affecting African products, particularly non-tariff barriers, and adopting commodity agreements;**
- **addressing the constraints imposed on development by African debt.**

The Programme acknowledged that African Governments were primarily responsible for the development of their economies. By supporting it unanimously, the international community recognized that without increased external assistance, Africa's tough economic reforms would not succeed. In short, the Programme adopted in 1986 represented a major reorientation of efforts for Africa's development by all concerned.

The UN system response

Virtually all of the more than 30 programmes and specialized agencies of the UN system responded to African Governments' requests for assistance in a variety of fields: from improving production and delivery of food, to mitigating the adverse effects of structural adjustment programmes; from improving land-use and water management, to providing family-planning services. In 1986, the Secretary-General established a Steering Committee and an Inter-Agency Task Force to help oversee and monitor implementation of the Programme for Africa's recovery and development.

Mid-term review of the Programme: African reforms

In November 1988 the General Assembly reviewed the Programme's results. The Secretary-General's report was disturbing. A majority of African countries were engaged in economic reforms and adjustment measures, but the economic crisis continued unabated in most parts of the continent.

- **In *agriculture*, almost all countries in the region had increased price incentives for farmers; about half had established national food-emergency preparedness mechanisms; 18 had set up early warning systems to detect the threat of famine.**

- **African *budgetary deficits* had been cut by nearly a third, partly through cuts in government employment and spending on social services. Many countries had begun efforts to improve overall economic management, to increase the efficiency of the public sector and to encourage market forces and the private sector. *Currency adjustments* had been made in several countries in order to cut non-essential imports.**

- **A growing number of countries were putting in place policies to *reduce population growth* and arrest environmental degradation.**

International response

Despite the international community's commitments under the Africa Recovery programme, the mid-term review showed a downward trend in real resource flows to Africa which continued to the end of the decade. Total net resource flows to Africa (measured in 1988 constant $US) dropped from $33.8 billion in 1985 to $28.2 billion in 1989. ODA has declined in real terms, export credits have continued to drop and other private commercial flows have remained negligible since 1983.

- **ECA has reported that deteriorating financial flows to Africa were compounded by a net transfer of financial resources—$279 million in 1989—from all of Africa to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This net "reverse" transfer was worse for sub-Saharan Africa which experienced a $657 million flow to the IMF. This negative transfer occurred in spite of major efforts by the multilateral financial institutions to increase financial flows to Africa.**

The decline continues

Despite the reforms, and faced with a deteriorating external environment, African economies continue to decline:

- **Between 1986 and 1989, according to the IMF's "World Economic Outlook", real per capita Gross Domestic Product fell an average of almost one per cent a year.**
- ***Infant and child deaths* have increased yearly and are projected by UNICEF to total 50 million in the period 1985-2000.**
- **Despite recent improvments in food production, Africa's dependence on imported food continues to rise. In 1989 it was estimated that the continent's food consumption exceeded production by 30 million tons per year. Even under optimistic assumptions, this figure is expected to rise to 45 million tons of cereals alone by the year 2000.**

The *collapse in commodity prices* also undermined the Recovery Programme. Commodities account for 90 per cent to 100 per cent of the export earnings of most countries in Africa. Export earnings are essential for Africa to import agricultural necessities such as fertilizers, equipment and machinery, as well as medical supplies, fuel and even food.

- **Africa's export income has continued to fluctuate wildly, reflecting its continued high dependence on raw commodities. Prices for coffee, a major export of more than 15 African countries, fell on average more than 50 per cent in 1989 alone. In real terms, prices for many commodities have fallen sharply in recent years, and long-term prospects for many commodities are bleak. Diversifying Africa's output is considered the main element in a lasting solution—but it will take time, and investment, to achieve.**

International awareness and responsibility: Conclusions of the review

The Assembly's mid-term review of the Programme of Action acknowledged the sacrifices being made by African countries as they pressed on with their difficult economic reform programmes. The Assembly unanimously supported a substantial increase in resource flows to the continent, alleviation of its debt burden and action on a host of other factors inhibiting recovery.

African States committed themselves again to give priority attention to "necessary economic reform" but not necessarily to "structural adjustment" in the sense that many industrialized countries understand it. For their part, the world's richer countries indicated that debt relief for poorer African countries would be part of their policy framework but they did not commit themselves to adopting significant elements of the African position on debt.

Reducing Africa's debt burden: A question of will

In many African countries, growth and long-term development are contingent upon resolving the debt problem. Africa's debt service obligations, estimated at $29 billion in 1987, are projected to reach $45 billion a year by 1995. UNCTAD estimates that by the year 2010, Africa's debt service will amount to over 280 per cent of its total export income.

- **Many of Africa's debts were incurred in the 1970s, when commodities like coffee, cocoa, sugar, sisal and uranium brought good prices on world markets. Credit was easy to obtain and imports were affordable. The situation changed dramatically as commodity prices dropped and oil prices rose sharply at the end of the 1970s.**

- **In 1988, an international Advisory Group of prominent bankers, economists and financial experts appointed by the UN Secretary-General concluded that Africa needed at least $5 billion a year in additional resources to cope with the economic crisis. The team concluded that traditional rescheduling procedures, which merely push the debt burden into the future with compound interest on market terms, make no sense for African countries with no prospect of becoming creditworthy in the foreseeable future.**

The report of the Advisory Group may have contributed to the pressure put on Africa's creditors to alleviate at least partially the debt burden on the poorest African countries. At a 1988 summit conference in Toronto, the leaders of the seven leading industrial States agreed in principle to a menu of options for dealing with Africa's debt, including partial debt cancellation, reductions in interest rates and extension of repayment periods.

- **Since Toronto, several developed countries, including Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States, have negotiated debt cancellation agreements with some African countries. By the end of 1989, the debts of 14 African countries were rescheduled on Toronto terms, but these agreements affected less than 10 per cent of their debt stock at the end of 1988.**

In a November 1989 study, the World Bank concluded that "Although the Toronto arrangements are in the right direction, clearly more far-reaching relief is needed." It adds that "what is missing is collective will on the part of the richer countries to deal decisively with the issue".

The debate over structural adjustment

In an attempt to turn their economies around and qualify for external assistance, many African countries undertook major and radical policy reforms in the 1980s: structural adjustment programmes which cut government spending, increased producer prices for farmers, devalued currencies and reduced imports. Many Governments recognized that these were sound economic policies for addressing balance-of-payments problems and hoped that they would result in revitalizing economic growth. Assisting in the formulation and implementation of these programmes were the World Bank and IMF, on whose support many countries depend for access to bilateral financing. But conventional structural adjustment programmes can severely affect the poorest members of society. A 1987 ILO study showed that in low-income countries where unemployment and malnutrition are already high and where a resilient industrial base is lacking, such measures may reduce balance-of-payments deficits but may not result in economic growth.

- **Paying more to farmers boosts production but also means higher food prices for all who must pay for food, including the urban poor and landless rural labourers.**

- **Cutting government expenditures often means laying off State-employed workers, adding to unemployment in countries where 20 to 40 per cent of adults are already without work. Reduced employment means depressed demand for goods and services, which in turn depresses production.**

- **Cutting government spending also means reduced spending on already meagre social services: clinics, hospitals and nutritional programmes all suffer, with severe consequences for the poor they serve.**

- **Exchange rate devaluation raises local prices of all imports in countries whose already weak industries are heavily dependent on imported goods. Price rises fuel inflation at a time when other measures are causing economic contraction.**

Côte d'Ivoire's experience earlier this year illustrates some of the problems in applying structural adjustment programmes. Having been unsuccessful in cutting back public-sector spending as specified under a programme negotiated with the IMF and World Bank, the Government proposed austerity measures by which civil servants would have 15 to 40 per cent of their salaries—and private-sector employees 11 per cent of their salaries—deposited in a Government fund to pay off debts to domestic suppliers. Unprecedented demonstrations and strikes broke out. Under great political pressure, the Government cancelled the proposals. However, the Government cannot avoid further austerity measures, and needs to create the political conditions to make implementing them possible.

The often heated debate on structural adjustment programmes has brought about a steady shift in views since the programmes were first introduced by the IMF and World Bank as a quick, stabilizing economic fix. UNICEF's 1987 study ''Adjustment with a Human Face'' did much to alert policy-makers to the possible negative social impact of the programmes, especially on the poor and on children, a theme further developed at the 1988 Khartoum Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, organized by ECA.

An emerging consensus?

The nature of the debate changed significantly in mid-1989 when ECA unveiled the *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes*, adopted earlier that year by African finance and planning ministers.

- **The Alternative recognizes the need for adjustment and reform in African economies, but asserts that orthodox structural adjustment supported by the World Bank and IMF ''is essentially not adapted to the African situation, which is characterized by weak production structures and imperfect markets''. For example, currency devaluation is designed to foster greater use of domestic resources, but often it has the effect of raising production costs, because of the economy's continued dependence on imported inputs such as machinery and spare parts.**

- **The bulk of the Alternative is addressed to African Governments and does not exonerate them from blame for current ills. It decries the absence of democracy and accountability in many countries as a major obstacle to economic growth, criticizes misguided domestic policies and wasteful expenditures, and points to growing defence budgets in countries not threatened by external forces.**

- **The Alternative acknowledges that even as African countries make reforms and move towards self-reliance, they still need external support and assistance. It calls for flexibility by multilateral development and financial institutions in both their expectations and their readiness to provide resources to support the new generation of structural adjustment programmes.**

- **When it discussed the Alternative in 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution inviting the international community, including the multilateral development and financial institutions, "to consider the (African Alternative) Framework as a basis for constructive dialogue".**

Continuing that dialogue, in November 1989 the World Bank put forth its contribution to consensus-building: a major report—years in the making—entitled "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth". While maintaining its emphasis on private sector development and cutbacks in government spending, the Bank called for a "human-centred" approach and proposed a "strategic agenda for the 1990s" which addresses many of the issues raised in the Alternative.

According to the report, in order for Africa to meet the World Bank's growth targets, aid flows must rise to $22 billion (averaging $32 per person) by the end of the century, from $12 billion ($26 per person) today. It also suggests that aid from donor countries should be far more selectively allocated, strongly supporting only those countries pursuing sound economic programmes. Aware that this has long been a sore point with African Governments, some of which consider such control of the international purse-strings to be a form of economic colonialism, the Bank cautions that donors must ensure that such conditional support "does not diminish Africans' right to determine what happens on their continent".

It remains to be seen exactly how the Bank's new guidelines will affect disbursements, and whether its strategic agenda can help to build consensus and generate the additional resources needed. Predictions are that donor countries' aid budgets are likely to remain tight, and that Eastern Europe will have considerably better access to Western aid and investment resources than Africa—a deep concern for many African leaders.

LITERACY

UNITED NATIONS

"Progress in literacy is self-reinforcing: every new literate represents a mind that can be mobilized to fight poverty, inequality, diseases and other woes of which illiteracy is a part."

Federico Mayor
Director-General of UNESCO

What is literacy?

In a world of 5 billion people, 1 billion are illiterate. Most of them are poor and live in rural areas of developing countries. But in recent years industrialized countries have become increasingly aware of their own illiterates—the so-called functional illiterates.

Generally speaking, literacy is one's ability to read and write in one's mother tongue or national language. According to UNESCO, the Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a person is literate when he can read and write and knows enough mathematics "for effective functioning in his group or community", and is capable of using these skills for his own and the community's development.

"Functional illiteracy" is the lack of sufficient reading and writing skills to cope with the demands of modern society.

The world through illiterate eyes

- **A young Ethiopian mother with a sick baby almost lost her child because she could not read the prescription on the medicine bottle.**
- **A herd of prime beef cattle was destroyed in the United States because a worker could not read and mistook a bag of poison for a nutritional supplement.**
- **An Indian farmer was cheated out of his ancestral land because he could not read what he was signing with his thumb-print.**

Some UNESCO statistics

- **An estimated 962 million people over 15 years of age cannot read and write.**

- **95 per cent of them live in developing countries.**
- **Two out of three are women.**
- **115 million children are not going to school, and are in danger of becoming the adult illiterates of the twenty-first century.**

International Literacy Year: 1990

Confronted with this global problem, the UN General Assembly declared 1990 as International Literacy Year (ILY), and designated UNESCO as the lead organization for the Year's preparation and observance.

The Year is intended to give a boost to literacy work being carried out around the world by Governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and especially grass-roots groups. The Year is the beginning of a decade of literacy-promoting activities, and of a new Plan of Action which UNESCO is putting into motion to combat illiteracy.

The goals of the Year are:

- **to increase government action against illiteracy and functional illiteracy, targeting in particular rural areas, urban slums, women and girls, and populations with special education needs;**
- **to promote public awareness of illiteracy and ways to combat it;**
- **to intensify popular participation everywhere;**
- **to strengthen co-operation among nations and within the UN system to achieve a literate world;**
- **to launch the UNESCO Plan of Action to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000.**

A World Conference on education

In March 1990, four UN bodies—UNESCO, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank—convened a meeting in Thailand of more than 1,500 decision-makers and experts from 155 countries: the World Conference on Education for All. This first-ever World Conference on education set goals for the 1990s, including:

- **expansion of early childhood development activities, especially for the poor;**
- **primary education for all;**
- **improvement in learning achievements;**
- **reduction of the adult illiteracy rate by half;**
- **expansion of training for youth and adults; and**
- **a greater role by all education channels, including the mass media.**

At the Conference, UNDP's Administrator quoted estimates showing that additional expenditure of $40 billion -$50 billion over the next 10 years could extend primary education to all children in the developing world. This sum, he said, "is only two days' expenditure on arms by the industrialized nations and only one week of military spending in the developing countries. It constitutes only 2 per cent of what developing countries are obliged to pay in debt servicing every year."

UNESCO and the battle for literacy

Active in promoting literacy since 1946, UNESCO has launched the "Plan of Action 1990-1999" to reduce illiteracy drastically the world over. The Plan is based on existing regional programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in the Arab countries. UNESCO's strategy is twofold:

- **universal primary education for children, to prevent future illiteracy; and**
- **literacy programmes for adults.**

In carrying out the Plan, UNESCO is working closely with Governments, NGOs, UN agencies and the mass media. Its literacy programmes promote research, training, information exchange and international co-operation in literacy and education. It helps its member countries develop and carry out literacy and education programmes, and provides funds for literacy projects to Governments and NGOs.

A network of partners

The drive for literacy requires an enormous effort by Governments, international organizations, NGOs and the mass media, as well as millions of communities and individuals around the world. Action in this direction is under way:

- **Over 100 Governments have formed national committees to carry out the work of the Year. Many Governments have launched national programmes to meet the Year's objectives.**
- **NGOs have joined together in the International Task Force on Literacy, an umbrella group for some 100,000 NGOs from all over the world. Working closely with UNESCO, the Task Force co-ordinates global action and mobilizes voluntary organizations in support of the Year. It was created in 1987 by the Toronto-based International Council on Adult Education, and comprises some 35 international NGOs and funding bodies.**
- **Media organizations from all over the world met at UNESCO headquarters in May 1989 to see how they could best contribute to the Year. Periodicals in many countries are now producing special issues or carrying regular features about the Year. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japan's largest daily, has launched a campaign to collect "a yen per illiterate" in Asia and the Pacific: the goal is a total of 666 million yen ($5 million), to be invested in literacy projects in the region.**
- **Various UN agencies—such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organization—have devoted portions of their work to fighting**

illiteracy. UNICEF and the World Bank announced in March 1990 a doubling by the mid-1990s of their funding of basic education.

Illiteracy in industrial countries

- **"I want to be able to read the menu and order for myself when I take my family out to dinner," said Percy when he joined a literacy class in New York, United States. Now retired, he could go to school, on and off, only for three years. After his children were grown, Percy joined a night class. Now he can read menus—and everything else. He looks forward to helping his grandchildren with their homework—something he could not do with his children.**

Every country has literacy problems. Altogether, industrial countries have an estimated 42 million adult illiterates and millions of functional illiterates. In the United States, functional illiterates number at least 13 million and in the Federal Republic of Germany no less than half a million.

These countries are paying a high price. In Canada, the direct cost to business of illiteracy amounts to more than $3 billion a year, according to a 1987 study. Indirect costs, such as increased work accidents, low productivity, and higher unemployment and training needs, amount to over $7 billion a year.

Literacy and development

"Education is an investment that repays itself with a profit," wrote the Scottish economist Adam Smith. This is apparent in all developing nations. World Bank studies consistently show that the economic returns from education are higher than from most other kinds of investment:

- **Four years of primary education, for example, is associated with an average increase in farm productivity of 10 per cent or more.**
- **Literate mothers have fewer, healthier and better-fed children.**
- **Every additional year a mother spends at school is associated with a drop in child mortality of about 9 per 1,000.**

"Education produces substantial value for the money," says the World Bank's President. "As people are educated, earnings grow; so do savings, so does investment and, in turn, so does the well-being of society overall."

A problem that can be solved

Illiteracy is a problem that can be solved. Successful, cost-effective techniques for literacy are being applied all over the world. In the last 15 years, 17 countries have managed to double their literacy rate, and five countries have more than tripled it.

By mobilizing professional associations and individuals in all walks of life, national literacy programmes have been successful even in the poorest nations. Various countries have promoted literacy by enlisting the support of religious schools, and by mobilizing the literate population in "each one teach one" campaigns.

- **The *United Republic of Tanzania*, in spite of meagre financial resources, has managed to achieve a remarkable 91 per cent literacy rate—up from a mere 30 per cent in 1970—by mobilizing high school and university students, retired teachers and itinerant tutors.**

- **In the *Federal Republic of Germany*, the Government has set up over 300 adult education centres for more than 10,000 illiterates.**

- **The *Republic of Korea* and *Taiwan* have invested heavily in education since the 1960s; as a return, their educated work-force has spurred their strong economic growth.**

- ***Costa Rica* has no army and no military budget, and it spends over 10 per cent of its gross national product on education and health. It has a literacy rate of over 93 per cent and its citizens a life expectancy of 75 years.**

- **The new system being pioneered by the *Bangladesh* Rural Advancement Committee offers a low-cost breakthrough. With 2,500 schools so far, and a further 2,000 to open by 1991, the programme is showing that basic education can be provided for a cost of $15 per pupil per year, by involving parents in putting up simple classrooms and selecting educated members of the community to act as teachers. The programme has been very successful in giving three years of basic education to 8- to 10-year-olds, and graduating 95 per cent of them into the fourth grade of the official education system.**

- ***Canada* is investing about $94 million over a five-year period to combat illiteracy. Announcing the initiative in 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney called for a "national effort" by all sectors of society.**

- **In *Jamaica*, illiteracy dropped from 50 to 18 per cent in the last 15 years, largely thanks to JAMAL, the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy. Despite limited resources, JAMAL has taught 248,000 people to read and write. Set up by the Government, it provides training in literacy and basic work skills for non-literate adults, and ensures children's attendance in school. JAMAL has organized literacy classes all over the country—in private homes, churches, community halls and schools. Private companies and the media have given solid support. Companies have provided funds and space for literacy classes in the workplace. The media have contributed radio programmes, newspaper articles and a popular television quiz show.**

- **Literacy programmes in the *United States* teach children and their parents simultaneously. The two groups are taught separately, but at the same time and in the same place. These highly successful "family literacy" programmes involve some 450,000 children, 3 to 4 years old, and their parents. Adults are given literacy training, which helps them obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma; their children are taught skills which will help them when they begin regular school.**

Other successful programmes are being carried out in China, Ethiopia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia and many other countries. Today, hundreds of millions of people are involved in literacy work throughout the world. "Illiteracy is a complex and difficult problem," says UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor. "But it is a problem for which we have an answer. We know how to combat it, and we aredoing so with success."

SOURCES

Publications

Several United Nations sales publications provide useful background information about current and past United Nations activities:

Basic Facts about the United Nations, is a handbook containing a concise description of the work of the UN and its related agencies; *Everyone's United Nations*, a basic reference work, gives a more detailed historical account of the UN system's activities. *UN Chronicle*, the official quarterly magazine of the UN, covers current developments in the UN system. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* is a major reference work which provides detailed information about all aspects of the Organization's work. (The most current Yearbook covers developments in 1985.) *The United Nations at Forty: A Foundation to Build On* is an historical look at the UN's work in its first four decades, to 1985. These publications and *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peace-keeping* are particularly useful sources for information about UN peacemaking and peace-keeping efforts. *United Nations: Image and Reality* provides answers to common questions about the way the UN works, its financing and staff.

These publications may be obtained from bookstores and distributors throughout the world. Consult your bookstore or write to *United Nations, Sales Section, Room DC2-0853, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, or Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland*. A catalogue of UN sales publications is available on request.

The UN Department of Public Information also publishes a variety of materials available on request, such as the Secretary-General's annual *Report on the work of the Organization*. Many of these can be obtained from the 67 UN Information Centres located in capital cities around the world, or from the *Public Inquiries Unit, Department of Public Information, United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, USA*.

United Nations documents

Most UN Information Centres maintain reference collections of UN documents. A number of libraries around the world have also been designated as depository libraries for UN documents and maintain collections for consultation by the public. For a list of UN Information Centres write to the Department of Public Information. Inquiries about depository libraries can be addressed to the *Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UN Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, USA*. Please note that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library itself is open to official users only.

Audio-visual materials

A variety of audio-visual materials produced by the UN and other organizations of the UN system are available for purchase, rent or loan from distributors, libraries and some UN offices (titles available and terms vary from country to country). Please note that films are *not* available for loan or rent direct from UN headquarters. A copy of the UN film catalogue can be obtained from UN Information Centres or by writing to the UN Department of Public Information.

The following are selected sources of additional information about UN system activities.

(*) indicates that an organization maintains a liaison/information office at United Nations Headquarters in New York

African Recovery

Africa Recovery
Department of Public Information
United Nations
New York, NY 10017, USA
(a periodical published by the UN
in English and French)

Disarmament

World Disarmament Campaign
Department for Disarmament Affairs
Room S-3100
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Drug Control

UN Division of Narcotic Drugs or
UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Environment

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya

Human Rights

United Nations Centre for Human Rights*
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Division for the Advancement of Women,
Centre for Social Development and
Humanitarian Affairs
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

International Literacy Year

United Nations Educational,
Scientific & Cultural Organization*
UNESCO House
7 Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France

Refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR)*
Case postale 2500
CH-1211 Genève 2 Depôt

United Nations Relief & Works
Agency for Palestine Refugees
in the Near East (UNRWA)*
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 700
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

World Economy & Development

UN Development Programme (UNDP)
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

World Food Programme
Via Cristoforo Colombo, 426
00145 Rome, Italy

World Food Council
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy

UN Conference on Trade & Development
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
UN Office at Nairobi
P.O. Box 30030
Nairobi, Kenya

UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
Room FF-0616
United Nations
New York, NY 10017, USA

International Research & Training
Institute for the Advancement of Women
(INSTRAW)*
P.O. Box 21747
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
220 East 42nd St., 19th floor
New York, NY 10017, USA

Independent specialized agencies:

Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)*
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
Centre William Rappard
154 rue de Lausanne
1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 100
Wargramer Strasse 5
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

International Bank for Reconstruction
& Development (World Bank)
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433, USA
(including International Development
Association (IDA) and International
Finance Corporation (IFC))

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
P.O. Box 400
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

International Fund for Agricultural
Development (IFAD)*
Via del Serafico 107
00142 Rome, Italy

International Labour Organisation (ILO)
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland

International Monetary Fund (IMF)
700 19th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20431, USA

International Maritime Organization (IMO)
4 Albert Embankment
London, SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*
P.O. Box 300
Vienna International Centre
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Universal Postal Union (UPU)
Weltepostrasse 4
Berne, Switzerland

World Health Organization (WHO)
20 avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

World Intellectual Property Organization
(WIPO)*
34 chemin des Colombettes
CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
Case postale No. 2300
CH. 1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING:
A few suggestions

Think of speakers who have impressed you. It's likely that they share certain characteristics: an ability to bring dry facts to life, solid knowledge, commitment, and a strong desire to communicate. To help those who write speeches and presentations, *Notes for Speakers* assembles in convenient form current information about the UN and selected issues before it. Good factual content is a vital prerequisite of effective public speaking about the UN.

Every topic and audience demands a different approach. On some formal occasions, simply reading a message or a statement may be appropriate. But most general audiences need a sense of interaction with a speaker, and each speaker develops his or her own style and techniques for reaching them. A series of workshops in public speaking for Secretariat officials at UN Headquarters provided practical suggestions for combining content and delivery in public speaking. A few of those suggestions follow:

Structure

Your speech should have a clear opening, body and closing. The *opening* should be just 2 or 3 minutes long. An opening anecdote, analogy or quote can help crystallize the presentation's central message. The *body* of the speech should consist of brief and well organized points. Information should be carefully selected to support the central theme and draw on examples, analogies or real-life experiences to animate the topic. Numbers and ratios should be made meaningful by relating them to the experience of the audience. Resist the temptation to say everything you know about a topic. Too much information can be worse than not enough. The body should be 10 to 15 minutes long.The *closing* should briefly summarize the speech and state its three most important points in 1 or 2 minutes.

Delivery

Establish real communication with your audience by focusing on them and not "locking" your eyes on your text. Finish each phrase looking at your audience, and look at them to emphasize points or raise questions. Know your topic well enough to depart from the text and extemporise without losing the connection to your main points. Use language that is easily spoken and understood.

best copy available

Stand with your weight even on both feet. Gestures and facial expressions should be animated and natural, and reinforce main points. Project your voice. An audience that can't hear you can't be interested in what you have to say.

Text

It may help to make three versions of your speech: a complete, edited text in paragraph form; a version marked for delivery with underlined words or phrases for emphasis and slashes to separate phrases; and a version which places each phrase on a separate line for ease of reading. (a few sample lines of the latter formats follow). Leave wide margins in your text for notes and reminders. Don't staple your text. Slide each page to the side so you can see both the previous and next page.

Sample layouts

(edited version with phrasing marks)

> **Not long ago/I was at a meeting with a colleague who had a terrible toothache./ And although the meeting was about the suffering of people living in poverty/it made very little impact on him./ The pain he was enduring at that moment was far more relevant/than the plight of strangers thousands of miles away./**
>
> **People who come from developing countries/tend to think that people in the richer, industrialized countries don't realise how severe their problems are./ Because the rich are too absorbed in their own immediate problems./ Although the UN is not an international financial institution/ like the World Bank and IMF,/ it has an important role to play in international economic problems./ All voices are heard in its debates—/ from the poorest countries to the richest. They remind us that all of our economies are interdependent,/ and that the problems we face individually/require us to work together.**

(Line-by-line version)

1. NOT LONG AGO
   I WAS AT A MEETING WITH A COLLEAGUE
   WHO HAD A TERRIBLE TOOTHACHE.

2. AND ALTHOUGH THE MEETING WAS ABOUT THE SUFFERING OF PEOPLE
   LIVING IN POVERTY
   IT MADE VERY LITTLE IMPACT ON HIM.

3. THE PAIN HE WAS ENDURING AT THAT MOMENT
   WAS FAR MORE RELEVANT THAN THE PLIGHT OF STRANGERS
   THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY.

4. PEOPLE WHO COME FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
   TEND TO THINK
   THAT PEOPLE IN THE RICHER, INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES
   DON'T REALISE
   HOW SEVERE THEIR PROBLEMS ARE.

5. BECAUSE THE RICH ARE TOO ABSORBED IN THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

6. ALTHOUGH THE UN IS NOT AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION
   LIKE THE WORLD BANK AND IMF
   IT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY
   IN THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

7. ALL VOICES ARE HEARD IN ITS DEBATES...
   FROM THE POOREST COUNTRIES...
   TO THE RICHEST.

8. THEY REMIND US
   THAT ALL OF OUR ECONOMIES ARE INTERDEPENDENT...
   AND THAT THE PROBLEMS WE FACE INDIVIDUALLY
   REQUIRE US TO WORK TOGETHER.